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THE FRINGE OF IMMORTALITY

THE FRINGE OF IMMORTALITY

BY

MARY E. MONTEITH

"In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die and their departure is taken for misery, and their going from us to be utter destruction : but they are in peace. For though they be punished in the sight of men, yet is their hope full of immortality."

The Wisdom of Solomon.

LONDON :
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

1920

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PREFACE

THIS book is composed, principally, of a few of the many experiences which have helped to convince the writer of the power of thought and, on this basis, of the power of the spirit independent of matter.

Gratitude is due to the people concerned in the various cases who have most generously allowed the publication of incidents which, by reason of their private and personal nature, may influence the hopeless outlook of those who stand 'twixt faith and knowledge.

The names and initials used are fictitious without exception.

Although care has been taken to ensure privacy, and certain details have been omitted in deference to the wishes of the family when they have been too sacred or too private to give in full, in no case has the addition of fiction been added to replace these omissions. It has been considered advisable to state only the facts sufficient to make the necessary point and, in consequence, the evidence for survival is less than would have been the case had equivalent, but fictitious, matter been introduced.

Full confidence, however, was permitted for the late editor of "The Nineteenth Century and After," who carefully examined the entire documentary evidence before he accepted the articles entitled "Automatic Writing," "Telepathy as a Natural Means of Communication," and "The Survival of Memory After Death."

Adequate testimony is necessary in the interests of psychical research. A great deal of evidence is lost because of the haphazard nature of psychic revelation. A clairaudient communication, for instance, may occur anywhere and at any time ; there is nothing to show for it except the knowledge of details referring either to the identity of an unknown communicator or to a prediction which may be confirmed only by subsequent events. When such details are confided, without delay, to responsible and disinterested persons, allowing nothing to depend on the word of a single individual, the matter may then be brought as evidential to the notice of the general public.

As time goes on and experience increases, opinions on all subjects are apt to be modified, intensified and, sometimes, completely changed. Prejudice is swept away by the tide of incoming invention ; impossibilities of old become everyday occurrences ; speculative thought, reality. Theories on abstract truths are more influenced by tangible discoveries than credit is allowed. "In the middle of the last century as the prestige

of Darwinism increased," remarks a modern writer, "it was almost as if the desert and the jungle had begun to voice themselves in human thought." Current literature shows that evolution has had a marked influence on nearly all subjects; and especially is this noticeable in the modern writings on matters of Faith, when we read the progressive views on the immediate life hereafter which was once held to be a static sleep.

An old scientist, somewhat opposed to speculative thought, once said to me, "Study facts and you will find each one a rung in the ladder you climb, and as each step will take you higher, so will all fall into a true perspective when seen from the higher point of view." The advice was sound, but all will agree, and none so readily as the scientist, that the impetus to discovery, the working hypothesis, is always an ideal before it is proved a reality. The hypothesis of survival is necessary for the investigation of much that is a natural, though little understood, faculty of human beings. Survival itself, when indicated, is but the lowest rung in a ladder which out-distances our greatest hope—the rung that touches earth.

Facts, however, do not change, but their position, when observed in relation to others, gives a key which progressively unlocks the doors of our understanding. Because of this progression, the theories advanced in these pages

are only so far as experience has led and, in this light, the attention is desired of "the worthiest sorte of people that gently can reade and justly can judge."

MARY E. MONTEITH.

INTRODUCTION

DEAR MISS MONTEITH,—

I am glad that you are going to make public some of your valuable experiences which I have followed with great interest and some amount of discriminating attention for the past eight years.

I can testify to having carefully noted the facts as presented to me from time to time, have examined the documents and the evidence produced as confirming your statements and conclusions.

While you have been obliged, for evident reasons, to conceal the identity of most of the individuals concerned, I have been privileged to become acquainted with some of these, and have questioned them regarding the facts and the history and precise sequence of the phenomena.

I therefore willingly bear testimony to the truth of your statements based on the facts presented.

"The Fringe of Immortality" will prove a most valuable contribution to the literature of psychic and metaphysic phenomena; and I congratulate you on the use of exact and, not

infrequently, of poetic phraseology suggestive to me, at times, of the writings of my old friend, F. W. H. Myers.

I am,

Yours very faithfully,

ABRAHAM WALLACE, M.D.

(Member of the Society for Psychical Research)

Harley Street, London, W.,

May, 1920.

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The chapters entitled "Automatic Writing," "Telepathy as a Natural Means of Communication," and "A Welcome Decree of the Archbishop of Canterbury," are reprinted by courtesy of *The Nineteenth Century and After*.

AUTOMATIC WRITING

THE FRINGE OF IMMORTALITY

AUTOMATIC WRITING

It is considered that Automatic Writing has played a large part in converting people to belief in an after-life, and, naturally, it runs the gauntlet of severe criticism from the sceptics, some of whom do not hesitate to denounce its practice as being hysterical and morbid owing to the fact that a similar form of writing is demonstrated in hysterical cases in the great nerve hospitals of Europe.

There are two sides to every question.

A distinguished French investigator classes such writing under the heading of intellectual phenomena in both its manifestations, i.e., the strictly automatic, where the hand or forearm is temporarily paralysed and devoid of any feeling, while the power of writing is retained; and the inspirational or intuitionist, when the automatist becomes mentally aware of the substance of the communication before the hand moves at all.

Automatic writing is certainly a faculty to be exploited, and many will agree that further investigation is necessary before it can be confined entirely to hospital cases or relegated unconditionally to the rubbish heap.

In my case, the writing comes to me when in a strictly normal condition, and unless I am in good health it does not assert itself. I have never felt that the movements of my hand were cut off entirely from my conscious intelligence, but the sensation is that of another hand over mine, guiding it (as a child is taught to write), varied by a mental perception which appears in some inexplicable way to control the physical action.

A common criticism of this automatic writing is, that, considering so much of it is supposed to come through the agency of departed spirits, information concerning the conditions of a future existence is vague, and the evidence often conflicting. Whether second-hand experiences of a state that, logically speaking, may vary individually as much in one life as another, apart from the fact that it applies only to the future, would benefit us to any extent during our present life, is a debatable question. We must also take into consideration the fact that there is still a great deal of honest doubt as to the survival of personality and the conscious existence of the individual after bodily death.

Automatic writing is not always supernormal—that is to say, does not always originate from excarnate individuals. It has been proved that sensible and accurate messages have been received through the means of automatic writing from the living, irrespective of space, and this system of human telegraphy may be carried to a very fine point when it is prearranged by two suitable people who are mentally attuned. This has the advantage of testimony by word of mouth from the experimenters on both sides, without the disadvantage of disbelief on the part of the sceptics as to the existence of one, or the possibility of a striking proof of identity placed to the credit of another's subconscious self. But the opening up of the resources of the mental powers claims inquiry, especially as almost daily events show they are far from being exhausted, and automatic writing should be judged by its results (exclusive of its origin), whether it be ghostly or human. Anything proven has a certain value, and if mental anguish be relieved in the smallest degree in these times of almost universal suffering, the media through which this has been achieved are worthy of consideration.

It is some years ago since I became interested in the subject, and my interest was aroused entirely by imperative messages given for me by one who had passed over, and whom I had known during his lifetime. These messages were

unsolicited, and, if he had not spontaneously given very decided proofs of his personality, some of which were unknown to me then, but since proved to be correct, I doubt if I should have carried out his wish to be allowed to develop my latent faculty in order to enable him to write directly through my hand. My personal knowledge of psychic experiments was then *nil*, and those I had heard of were limited to a few primitive and extremely silly attempts to find out future events of no importance. The writing developed and as it became coherent I found this "personality," Dr. Neil, was very particular that I should take a critical attitude and be careful to sift all matter given to me, as well as to substantiate everything, so far as possible, looking for practical results to justify his object.

Before very long I was able to verify a message. The story is trivial, but the fact of my information being correct enabled me to give practical help in a very deserving case, and decided me once for all to continue the study of a subject which has led me on to other and more interesting developments, under the same guidance.

The first part of the message was written through the hand of a friend, whose sister and I were present at the time. The message was as follows : " There are people in distress at 3, Smith Street in this town. Tell Miss M. to go and see what she can do for them." We could get no

name and no more particulars were forthcoming until the evening, when I was alone, and then I was told, in writing of course, that the people at 3, Smith Street had recently lost their parents and were in need of work. I was asked, in the event of not finding them at the address given, to make inquiries as to their whereabouts. The next morning I went on my mission in a dubious frame of mind, to discover, after a little difficulty, that Smith Street was in a poor part of the town, and that No. 3 was standing empty, with "To Let" in the window. A woman next door told me the name of the people who had lived there, and where they had gone, volunteering the information that two deaths had occurred in the family in the last three months, and that she had heard they were left in very poor circumstances. On my calling at the new address, a sad-looking young woman opened the door. I explained that a friend had told me they were in trouble, and I had come to help them. She invited me in without question, and I had no difficulty in gaining her confidence. It was a sad case. Both she and her sister were very delicate and unable to get work. One had been trained for a profession, but she had lost her posts successively through ill-health, which prevented her going out regularly, and she was not in a position to make a private connection, which was their only hope of earning a living. Poor as they were, they were

AUTOMATIC WRITING

obviously not the class to beg, and their natural reticence had brought them to a very low pass ; as a matter of fact I know now that a great deal of the ill-health was due to lack of sufficient food. There was no difficulty in helping them ; now circumstances are changed, they are well, happy and prosperous. In addition to a letter from one of the persons living at 3, Smith Street, the evidence includes letters from the friend who wrote the first part of the message and her sister who testifies as witness.

Concentration necessary for the practice of automatic writing will sometimes lead to the development of a keener sense of the intuitive faculty. In the course of time the actual writing becomes unnecessary in order to convey information unknown to the sensitive, which can be distinctly impressed on the mind. But it is wise not to reject such a simple method as the use of a pencil, for writing is visible evidence : also, when a prophecy so given takes time to work out completely, the investigator will find it more satisfactory to turn to a page where the details are inscribed than to trust entirely to memory.

The following prediction is one which was fulfilled so many years after it was first given that the original writing was destroyed in mistake, much to my regret. Happily I had taken the precaution of confiding its purport to several

"righteous souls," making sure of adequate testimony in the event of a correct prediction.

Dr. Neil takes a great interest in my circle of friends, and asked me to make a point of knowing a certain Mrs. Burton. He wished me specially to interest her in the subject of spirit communication and to give her the benefit of all I had been able to prove, a course of action which was then contrary to my rule of keeping these matters strictly to myself.

We had interests in common and I came to know her and her husband, Major Burton, very well, and many were the discussions we had on all branches of psychology. It was an advantage to me, for Mrs. Burton had mixed in scientific society and had the subject at her finger-tips; moreover, she was profoundly sceptical regarding all psychic matters, critical to a degree, and openly acknowledged that only proofs of memory surviving death from a personal friend could convince her of any sort of existence beyond the grave. So far, she had never come across anybody with practical experiences of this kind, and she became much interested in the various messages I received, for like many other sceptical souls she dreaded the apparent finality of death.

Later, I received further messages by the medium of automatic writing from Dr. Neil, showing the need for convincing her of a happier belief. It was an emphatic statement that

Major Burton would die suddenly abroad in a hot, unhealthy climate at no very distant date. He was starting for India almost immediately, and I begged for permission to tell them, hoping it might prevent him from taking a possible appointment in an unhealthy district and so avoid the danger. This was refused, on the grounds that nothing could alter his fate.

When the war with Germany broke out Major Burton was again in India, and at first it seemed unlikely that he would be involved in it, as his regiment was not amongst those sent to Flanders ; but later he received orders for Mesopotamia, where he was hit by a bullet in a vital part and killed instantaneously.

The sequel to this will be best explained in a letter I have just received from Mrs. Burton in answer to one I wrote asking for her approval and corroboration of the above :

" DEAR M.—I have read your account . . . One important point you do not mention, the fact that Jack gave such good proofs of his identity so soon after his death, so quickly putting an end to one's misery and uncertainty—proofs so convincing and so many, they would take too long to enumerate. Some of them perhaps could be explained by telepathy, but it is unlikely that you could have told me things long forgotten by myself and persisted in

even in spite of my flat contradictions. With regard to the silver cup, telepathy was impossible in that case: don't you remember it disappeared when Jack's things were sent home? We were sure it had been stolen, it seemed the only possible explanation, but Jack's message (which we wrote down at the time) was that he 'knew it was safe and would arrive.' Now after sixteen months it has done so without a word of explanation and no clue as to who sent it.

"In case you would like to publish this I will sign it.

"ELEANOR BURTON."

The silver cup alluded to by Mrs. Burton was one which Major Burton had deposited in a safe place before he went into action. This fact, which he purported to state most emphatically, was unknown to anyone in England at the time the communication was received.

A few lines from another correspondent will complete the evidence, which consists further of other correspondence confirming fuller details.

"As regards the prediction of Major Burton's death, you told me of it as far back as 1911, all of which came true to the smallest detail.

"Mrs. Burton has been a friend of mine for some years, and of course I knew him too, and

can realise how much all this means to them both—M.”

Another prediction, brief and very much to the point, was not only true but successful in its primary object, namely, to relieve unnecessary suffering. It was given to me for a Mrs. Wood, and was wonderfully helpful, owing to her faith in Dr. Neil's messages after years of personal investigation.

People connected with the Royal Navy will remember how the declaration of war was instantly followed by the news that our Fleet had sailed, destination unknown, bringing home to them the realisation of what war might mean before others could take in the stupendous possibilities. A false report at the end of August of a naval engagement with loss of certain ships, caused many needless fears. Mrs. Wood's apprehension for the safety of her son, an officer in one of His Majesty's ships, aroused Dr. Neil's interest and sympathy for her evident distress and its undoubtedly harmful effect on her health.

“ Tell her from me,” he wrote, “ to put anxiety out of her mind. The boy will be in very great danger, but he will come out of it all right and with distinction. If she is calm it is better for him. He may be wounded, but there need be no anxiety—he will be all right.” Subsequently

he told me to make her realise that there was something to face in the near future (it was better for a woman of her temperament to be prepared, he said) : and to remind her when the time came that there need be no anxiety—promotion being the outcome of the engagement.

Shortly after this, the boy's ship was in action. I was naturally a little anxious, but Dr. Neil again assured me that Frank Wood was safe, and that a telegram was on its way to his mother. It arrived about three hours after I received this message, and stated briefly that he was wounded.

Mrs. Wood wrote to me, hoping that Dr. Neil would give her more particulars, but all he would say was "the danger is over. There is no suffering—no limbs lost," and I believe she settled down quietly to wait for further news. It came, after a little delay, from the doctor who was attending the case, and was satisfactory in corroborating our message.

When we heard the description of the terrible injuries inflicted on those at the boy's side, we realised that the great danger predicted was not a mere *façon de parler*, apart from the fact that the wound he received so narrowly missed a vital spot. Convalescence took many tedious months, but the distinction gained was great, and the experience was not harmful in its after-effects.

A second message regarding this young officer was given, saying he would emerge safely and unwounded from his next and inevitable naval engagement. "Nothing to fear this time," wrote Dr. Neil.

Mrs. Wood was out of town when another brush with the enemy was reported, and my only information was from the newspaper reports, which gave no news of her son's ship having been in action. Immediately I received the following message for Mrs. Wood—"The boy is unhurt, write to his mother and tell her." It was quite correct. The ship had been struck in the thick of the fighting and, although there were many casualties on board, he was not wounded. When I wrote to Mrs. Wood she had had no word of her son, but my letter was supplemented by a line from him the same day, saying "All well." I submitted this account to Mrs. Wood and have received the following answer :

"Having read the manuscript of my son's case carefully I can corroborate all.

"The whole subject is of great interest to me as I have had the advantage of seeing so much of the automatic writing, and watching the wonderfully accurate developments for so many years, and it has been a happiness to me to help you in difficult cases of need which were brought to our knowledge in this way.

"To me the greatest proofs of personality surviving death are not so wonderful as the desire to care for the suffering ones left behind invariably shown in the messages.

"MARY WOOD."

Fuller particulars in the case of the naval officer consist of the opinion given to his mother by the medical adviser that on the day of Dr. Neil's message "the danger was over," he found the boy in such a pitiable condition that he could not tell how it would go with him; a letter from the surgeon himself saying he could see no reason why I should not publish his letter of diagnosis—a semi-professional letter—which an unfortunate circumstance rendered impossible; a copy of the telegram confirming the prediction stated; odd correspondence and newspaper cuttings confirming "the distinction" predicted and the danger of the second experience, the details of which were not known to us until some time after the message was given saying "the boy is unhurt."

When once a channel is opened through which thoughts outside the medium's conscious mentality enter, it is astonishing how much automatic writing can be traced to the subconscious influence of the living. This is so potent a factor that one hesitates to ascribe messages to the dead, however genuine they may appear, before

exhausting the possibility of a living source. The author, whether living or dead, can occasionally be identified by the handwriting. The style of a letter in either case will also help to give a clue to his identity; but, apart from that, judging by practical experiences, I think a critical medium can distinguish between messages from the living and a disembodied spirit deliberately using the brain or hand necessary to convey the information "it" desires to give in readable form. In the former case, although it is extraordinary how strongly the hand can be controlled by the power of thought at any distance (materially speaking), generally the writing is feeble and not very convincing; while in the latter I find there is a consciousness of another's personality over and above my own—some one else using my hand with a considerable amount of force, whilst I am standing by and observing, with keen interest, points of character, and experiencing sensations of physical ailments or suffering, especially those manifested at the time of death by the communicator.

Theosophists tell us the appearance of the spirit of the individual in what is called the "Astral" Body is by no means confined to the dead. There are well-authenticated stories of apparently substantial ghosts appearing and being mistaken by several independent witnesses for the real person, the real person being alive

at the time some distance away, awake, in good health, and innocent of any attempt at experiments of such a nature.

But I have only on two occasions distinguished a living personality at my side in the way I have just described—one being in the middle of the night, when I was awakened by a sense of an old lady of my acquaintance (whose regular habits would imply that at that time she was sound asleep) calling me to get up and write. I found a pencil and paper and received a letter written rapidly in her handwriting, needless to say with my hand. She had been lost, she said, and brought to me by a friend she had met unexpectedly. This friend was dead, she knew, and she had come to the conclusion that she must be dead too. She wanted to say good-bye, and told me all her affairs were in order, with the exception of a slight matter to which I promised to attend. She mentioned one or two of her treasures, and finished by telling me she had left a certain *protégée* a legacy ensuring her £45 a year.

As she was very reserved and had a great dislike to anything of an uncanny nature, I was unable, when we next met, to broach the subject to her beyond leading her on to talk of her curios; but I found she did possess some she had described to me that night, and others, strangely enough, she bought subsequently.

Several years later she died. It was discovered that she had left the person mentioned an annual income of £54 (not £45), a fact I have reason to believe was only known to her and her solicitor.

This nocturnal experience of the old lady who thought she was dead was fully described in a letter I wrote to a friend abroad on the following day, before the death could be confirmed. This friend was an interested listener to the conversation the old lady and I had years later, when she spoke of certain curios normally unknown to us.

The other case was the appearance of an unknown personality whose influence was strong enough for me to feel and describe details of past ill-health, physical sufferings, and the taste of a drug it had been necessary to give her, the lady in question being out of her mind and in an asylum. It is significant that I was not sensible of anything applicable to her present physical or mental condition. Although there are marked characteristics that have developed since it became necessary to place her under control, I have only been able to describe those previous to her mental derangement. Both she and her husband (Mr. and Mrs. D——) were complete strangers to me. I practically knew nothing of them apart from the fact that they existed and were connections of a lady of my acquaintance who gave me Mr. D——'s address and advised

me to send the information direct to him as requested. The following are quotations from the letter I sent to Mr. D——, together with a message referring to some private affairs that were causing her anxiety.

“ I want you to write, I am alive. My friend has spoken to you of me. Her name is A——. I am not in the body that was mine. It is only at times I am able to use it. . . . If you could settle my husband's mind about me I should be grateful. It is misery to him to think that I am out of my mind. My mind is quite clear and strong, but I cannot use that body any more. It hurts me that I cannot speak to him and tell him I am not there, and I want to care for my little child.”

I refused to send the message without some proof of identity, and received the following communication from Dr. Neil, referring to Mrs. D—— : “ I want you to do all you can to enable her to give full information. It is not an uncommon case, but it is seldom possible to give the position from the spirit side. We are helping to prove her identity.” A few days later she gave me nine proofs. The first was memory of some article she possessed in the shape of a rose ; the others, descriptions of a foreign country where they stayed, her favourite colour, one of her dresses, and so on, personal details only of

individual interest; and lastly she showed me herself sitting gazing into the distance and nervously biting at her little finger. With this I received more automatic writing from Dr. Neil: "She is very impatient of her husband thinking the 'person' is herself—cannot understand how it is he is not able to see it is some one entirely different. This must be sent to Mr. D—— at once. We must go step by step. First, Mrs. D—— must be pacified, and the only way is to convince him she is not in that body—to make her feel sure he has got her message and believes it is really from her, and to make her sure she can send him more when necessary." I sent all this to Mr. D——, and received the following reply:

"DEAR MISS MONTEITH,—I have received your letter and the enclosure, which I have read with much interest. I have long been of the opinion that my wife's real self was absent from her body, or that some part of her was absent, for, though something alive remains which retains some of the characteristics, it is very unlike her real self. As to the proofs of identity given, I recognise all except the ninth. I don't remember her habit of biting her finger. . . .

"Yours sincerely,
"W. D."

And another letter followed shortly :

“ I told you in my last letter that I did not remember my wife having a habit of biting her finger. . . . A sister of mine tells me that she remembers the habit perfectly, also the way my wife's eyes would light up when she smiled. . . . ”

When I met him, Mr. D—— gave me particulars of his wife's illness, after which she gradually got more delicate ; ultimately sinking into a cataleptic state, lying perfectly stiff with her eyes closed for several days. After this it was necessary to place her in an asylum. He showed me “ the rose.” It is an ingenious silver ornament which, on being unscrewed, changes into the form of a full-blown rose, a unique possession.

These letters that Mr. D—— kindly allowed me to publish are, of course, in existence. The reason that impelled the communication was extreme anxiety for the child and a desire to explain a great deal that, although interesting, cannot, owing to the present lack of knowledge of certain forms of insanity, be verified.

Telepathy that takes the form of automatic writing is remarkably interesting and accurate when prearranged by two suitable experimenters. The sense of the communication is received without much difficulty, but the vocabulary is that of the medium rather than that of the control,

unless the control be an exceptionally strong personality and the medium exceedingly subservient. There are so many well-known examples of this that I propose to give one only, for the reason that the development was entirely different from what we intended, and the man, Mr. Innes, who was at the time "somewhere on active service," was totally ignorant on the subject of psychical research, apart from what I wrote to him. The experiment was purely precautionary, suggested to relieve his sister's mind, if possible, in the event of his being taken prisoner. I knew him very little, and was not in the habit of writing to him at all, until I sent a letter explaining how to communicate with me should he at any time be unable to write to his people, and I arranged that if he were reported missing I would look for a message every evening at nine o'clock. Dr. Neil wrote: "You will have no difficulty in establishing a line of communication between you." No letters passed between us after this, and no attempt to convey information was made until nearly five months later, when, on the 4th of May, at 9.40 a.m., the following came through: "My senses seem to be leaving me—there is only time to send you word I was wounded and was taken by the enemy."

It seemed to me too feeble to be at all convincing, and as I had him very much on my mind I felt the message might be imagination, due to

my anxiety. As I was thinking this, there was a quick vibration which shook my hand: it wrote a capital D and scribbled something unrecognisable, and then a strong feeling came over me that he was in distress. I asked Dr. Neil to go to him.

A week later a post card was sent to me, written by Mr. Innes to his sister. It was signed by a nickname which I am not aware of having seen before, and, comparing it with the scribble I had written automatically, it was identical; it is considered so by all those who have seen it.

I wrote to him saying that I had received a message from him on the 4th of May and had answered it immediately, giving no clue as to the nature of the answer. A letter came to me from him at the end of the month signed, as usual, Donald Innes, saying he had sent a message on the 4th of May and had received an answer in this way. His nerve was badly affected by the incessant shelling—but after sending a call for help to me, in a short time he felt that I had got it all right, and instead of fear, he began to feel calm, strong and quite happy, and when it came to charging through a village amongst shells and “curtain fire” the excitement he experienced was tremendous, and he thoroughly enjoyed it!

He told me, when home on leave a short time ago, that the message I got on the 4th, “My senses seem to be leaving me; there is only time

to send you word I was wounded and was taken by the enemy," he did not consciously send. All he could manage in the noise and confusion was a cry to me, and he sent it between 9.30 and 10 that very morning, and what he took to be the answer—his uplifted state of mind and calmed nerves—came about ten.

He gave me an account of some incidents of a few days before, which may throw a little light on the subconscious message that reached me. On the 1st of May they had orders to hold a fort at any cost, for no supports could be sent; had they failed, the whole company must have been killed or taken prisoners. They held it. On the 2nd there was a heavy bombardment, which was so deadly in its effects that it caused great confusion and drove the men inside the fort for safety. One big shell crashed through the concrete apron, and Mr. Innes, with others, fainted from the shock and concussion. In a letter that I received from him he wrote: "Before losing consciousness my last impression from the shouts and confusion was that we had been cut off and surrounded."

We are still continuing our "wireless," and he is successful in sending me information which, although brief, is accurate.

One more point that I think worth recording is this: when Mr. Innes regained his nerve on the 4th of May, and in times of danger since, he has

been conscious of a strong personality near guiding him here and there, making him do things "on the jump," as he expressed it in the course of conversation at a future time, when he gave me a fairly accurate description of Dr. Neil, adding that the impression he received was that of an athlete. Now, Mr. Innes knew nothing of Dr. Neil and his co-operation with me; he had no idea of our theory that much can be done by people on "the other side" to allay pain or fear, nor of his efforts to help in nervous cases where a stronger mind may control the patient with a beneficial result, many of which results can be classed under the name of coincidences, incidents coinciding with written promises; and the description of an athlete was not applicable to the doctor as I knew him in life, but I remembered later I had heard from one of his old friends that in early days he had achieved great distinction and played a leading part in various forms of sport.

In regard to the telepathy between Mr. Innes and myself, besides his letters to me and many "automatically" written telepathic messages, too trivial to repeat, there are copies of his letters home, a diary * covering the time when he was

* This diary was published in form of a letter written to a personal friend with a sketch of Mr. Innes's previous career as "interesting impressions of a modern battle, not those of a novice."

wounded and taken by the enemy, a photograph of the fort, and the post card signed by a nickname through which I recognised my automatic scribble.

To give an idea of the experience I will quote from a letter written to his people :

“ We have just come down for a breather after four days of hell. Yesterday was the limit. They bombarded us for ten hours without let up. My company was in a little fort, and those devils bounced 15-inch shells on it at the rate of one a minute for ten hours, not counting the little ones. They chewed off corners of it, but the old box held together—of course every look-out was wounded about half an hour after we went out.”

A letter to me, dated a fortnight later in answer to mine referring to the message I had received telepathically—“ My senses seem to be leaving me ”—contains the following :

“ I got your letter last night but I got your ‘ message ’ in return of mine the same day. That very day we went through a fiery hell of shell fire and what is known as *feu de barrage*. . . . You will believe me and know I am speaking the truth when I tell you I enjoyed that wild rush on the 4th of May. It is strange that just

the few shells at the beginning which really did no harm should affect me more than the rain of shells and shrapnel afterwards. When I said I got your reply to my message I didn't mean I got any message, but just a reassured feeling."

and signed most decorously, "Donald Innes."

Mr. Innes summarised the whole episode before its publication when we met again in January, 1918:

"I am giving you this letter in case you should require it to confirm your statement. I received your letter (the first you ever wrote me) in October, 1915, telling me how to send a telepathic letter to you should I be taken prisoner. My first attempt to send you a message was on the 4th of May, 1916, between 9.30 and 10 a.m., just before we attacked D——. I was somewhat shaken up by the bombardment in one of the forts at —— two days before. The fort was shelled constantly for ten hours, and several men, amongst them I, fainted from the concussion just before the attack broke loose. Before losing consciousness my last impression from the shouts and confusion was that we had been cut off and surrounded.

"This message on the 4th of May I sent hurriedly to you for moral support to steady my nerves for the attack. Soon after I was

keenly aware of a moral stiffening and during the attack felt the constant companionship of some one unseen urging me on, pointing out the most dangerous spots. I described this personality to you as best I could when we met later. I have only been aware of this influence in times of extreme danger."

PSYCHIC DEVELOPMENT

PSYCHIC DEVELOPMENT

AT the time when my interest was actively aroused by the Dr. Neil of the preceding chapter, now well over ten years ago, my whole knowledge of the subject can be summed up in a few lines.

I had once met a man who had known Frederick Myers slightly, but the conversation we had, although deeply interesting in regard to the personality of such a gifted writer, did not induce me to read "Human Personality After Bodily Death," when I saw the size of the volumes. I did dip into "The Survival of Man," however, and fully realised the importance of evidence that could attract the attention of a scientist like Sir Oliver Lodge, but I must confess to have understood very little of the subject, too little to read the book from beginning to end.

If I had any definite views on life after death, it was that the discarnate souls were far away from earth as a general rule, and that any sort of communication could only be slight indications that they existed; such messages could never

have any practical bearing on our life in this world and were, in consequence, useless for the average human being. The conditions under which psychic experiments were carried out, séances and the trance state of mediumship, struck me as better left in the hands of the scientists or others equally competent to judge the results. On that point my opinion has not changed, but it is, I acknowledge, one in which I have no practical interest, but I also feel, very strongly, that the advantage of competent guidance is very necessary to the ordinary woman who is face to face with personal manifestations of a psychic nature.

The possibility of a natural form of communication from the dead under normal circumstances was borne upon me in a conversation I had during an afternoon call on an acquaintance who informed me that she had an important message to deliver from a man who wished to take this opportunity of communicating a desire. Taking it for granted that I understood what she meant, without a moment's hesitation she proceeded to give a detailed description of his appearance, age, Christian name, profession, country, month and approximately the year of his decease, all of which I immediately recognised.

Before I had time to express my astonishment at a message from a deceased man, she went on,

as if repeating the words of a third person in the room, making allusions to incidents in his career, the subject of a particular book he had once given me—"his name is not written in that book but it is in another," she said, describing the size and character of the other volume and added a word—"that is something which you will understand." That word arrested my attention. It was a *sobriquet* by which I was known to the communicating personality and a family of mutual friends, connected with incidents of the past that I had not, consciously, thought of for years.

Old memories were awakened one by one with no hesitation on the part of the speaker and, at last, the message was delivered, telling me that this "doctor" wished me to make quite sure of his identity and to allow him to communicate directly in writing and that he would, through the means of writing, tell me himself why he desired to get into personal touch.

It was some months before I was able to take in the import of the message—that a means of communication could be established between us—for writing from the dead was an unheard-of possibility. There had never been any indications of a psychic faculty unless one may count sudden and helpful inspirations bearing on private affairs—I regarded them as answers to prayer—and an indescribable feeling of the presence of

certain friends I had lost through death which was firmly attributed to my imagination.

My very first psychic experience occurred when I was looking up a crest in the jeweller's crest book soon after this episode, to verify one of the messages. The message was that the doctor, who apparently was visualised, pointed to a seal ring which he wore on a certain finger of his left hand, and gave a description of what we took to be the crest which he desired me to confirm. I was running my finger down the page to find his name when my hand stopped with a feeling of weight upon it, seemingly independent of my will. The finger was pointing at a different name, or rather a different spelling of the same name, one letter different. The crest I found was exactly that as described, but not, as I ascertained subsequently, the one engraved on the seal ring, and used by the doctor's family. Strictly speaking, it was a test that failed—that is to say, if it was an attempt to describe the crest on his ring and, as subsequent communications have proved, the only test I have ever known to be incorrect from this source. But the symbolical meaning of the crest had a direct personal interpretation and was significant in its bearing on the other and also later messages. The doctor is in the habit of giving me information in such a way as to obviate all possibility of telepathy from a human source, or the subconscious activity of

old recollections, as might have been the case had the crest been that engraved on the ring he was in the habit of wearing, but this must be described as a coincidence.

Circumstances brought about one more meeting with the psychic acquaintance who was good enough to give me an explanation of what "writing" meant, and rendered more help in establishing the identity of my would-be communicator. The proofs were mostly known to me, but there were exceptions, one being the description of an incident bearing on this doctor's profession and accompanied by details that neither of us could recognise until they were explained by a medical man as familiar enough to any in that profession but not generally known. A former statement satisfactorily verified was the month of the doctor's decease, and that was all the more convincing because it was the previous month to that which I had always been given to understand. There were many other personal statements outside our knowledge which I was able to verify. Some were given, at a later date, through my own hand. Naturally, those I could recognise at the time were the most convincing, for telepathy was then an unknown explanation to me, but there was always the injunction to verify information which I felt was important, and this I now understand to be an absolute necessity.

There was no doubt in my mind as to the identity of the communicator, nor could I question his wisdom and integrity on the supposition that he was unchanged by the transition from one state to another. I knew, also, that such a character would have some strong purpose for desiring to get into personal touch, and thus to gain an opportunity of explaining himself without the intervention of a third person. "Work scientifically" were the words, "and by co-operation we may help to establish a discovery which will benefit mankind." The whole idea was characteristic of a man who had a passion for scientific discovery and a practical sympathy for suffering humanity which engrossed his whole life. And so, although the method of possible communication by writing was put aside as an impossibility without a trial, I decided to give, as suggested, ten minutes each day for quiet meditation, out of which, I was told, would come a development of a psychic gift which would enable me to judge all for myself.

I can only suppose that anything psychic in my nature lay dormant only awaiting a definite cause to arouse such a faculty; in the course of a few days I became aware of clear impressions that could, to some extent, be confirmed. A little bit of information, for example, said to be in a certain book, came constantly; an answer would be given to something that was puzzling

me—an explanation of a strange word, for instance; scraps of knowledge would enter my mind with additional criticism that was, I felt, beyond my powers; all purely mental, but none the less real at the moment and verifiable. Sometimes I could distinguish the *timbre* of a familiar voice; now and again, I saw a figure walk into the room about a foot from the ground. It was all over in a flash, convincing at the time, but afterwards sense of unreality made me doubt. I had nothing to show for it and there was no one, either, with whom I cared to discuss such a fantasy until one day a friend broached the subject of automatic writing and told me that a personal demonstration had occurred without warning, and how, from the substance of the writing, she had reason to believe that the source was a personality whom she could trust, and that the writing was quite genuine. Through this friend I was enabled to get more information, and tests which I volunteered in the form of questions were answered correctly.

“Where did we last meet?” “At Mrs. E’s” was the swift reply, and on my demurring that our hostess was a Mrs. M. and Mrs. E. did not exist, “at Mrs. E’s” was repeated until we stopped the writing impatiently. But, some time afterwards, it dawned on me that E was the initial of the one who had conveyed the original messages and the last meeting was “at Mrs. E’s,”

whose name was then unknown to the writer. These are, however, trivial details that played their part in teaching us patience.

About three months later I began to write unexpectedly. A sudden impulse to get a pencil and see what would happen resulted in a few words lightly scribbled but quite legible. Of course, my attitude was changed. I did believe, by this time, that there was something in it and soon the handwriting became characteristic, totally unlike my own and, after the first few attempts, when letter by letter was slowly produced, the rapidity with which a long communication was thus written disposed of the idea that it was my own composition. As time went on, however, there was a change. The writing proceeded at a normal pace, but every word, and sometimes every sentence, was mentally conceived before any action of the hand followed. It was nearly simultaneous, but so like the ordinary method of writing that I felt sure that the sole influence was that of my own mind—I was doing it all—and I discarded this means of communication as false.

This decision did not prevent a further development of the intuitive faculty, and impressions became clearer and were, when verifiable, so seldom at fault that I eventually made a note of anything interesting, for I began to see the possible value of visible evidence in the absence of perfect memory. Without any conscious

effort on my part there was a gradual unfolding of an extra-consciousness by which I became aware of the interpenetration of a world commonly known as spiritual.

There were many ups and downs on this road of progression. Marvellous manifestations were succeeded by an absence of any sort of phenomena: there were weeks of doubt and misgivings. Every preconceived prejudice would come to the fore on the slightest provocation. The fact that everything came naturally—for the sole experiment was an occasional meeting principally for the purpose of argument with my friend the automatic writer—only strengthened the certainty that there was something queer in me which was, happily, unnoticed by my family and intimate friends.

On further consideration I came to the conclusion that "the doctor" who, in his earth life, was a man of marked learning and forcible character, was entitled after all to a fair hearing, and I again returned to the plan of writing for ten minutes each day, and sometimes a little longer when the subject proved interesting. Treating him as a reasonable being, if disincarnate, I got better results, and I was forced to acknowledge that the papers were extremely characteristic not of me, but of him, that when unknown facts were advanced they were verified to the smallest detail. There was evidence of

the influence of the spirit of some one I had known, vital in expression and strong in purpose.

The advice he gave was simple and logical.

Psychic development, I was told, depended more on concentration than on anything else—not practised artificially, but habitually on every little thing in everyday life. Not only did concentration make for health and efficiency in ordinary course of events, but it built up a sound foundation for increased mental power, which would lead to an individual understanding of the higher laws of nature.

Balance was another point on which he insisted. The study of a practical subject was necessary in line with that of psychic discovery and everything in proportion; but the proportion of spirit communication was exceedingly small in comparison with other matters. The daily ten minutes was sometimes extended to half an hour, but it was out of my power to increase it; after the stated time no more writing came. I could not turn it on at will.

Infallibility on any point was disclaimed, and in no case was advice to be taken that fell short of reason and common sense. It was explained that a human instrument sometimes failed to respond accurately, and, therefore, at the beginning of psychic development there must be a residue of worthless messages to be cast aside. Patience and verification were advised. Proofs

were promised whenever possible and, when not forthcoming, the critical attitude was to be observed and, in the question of predictions, adequate testimony was to be obtained before the possibility of fulfilment.

Our co-operation had, as its object, to attain personal knowledge of the higher laws which could be practically brought to bear on earthly existence.

For a short period I had the inevitable suspicion of orthodox training that all this must be the devil, and I argued this point with some heat in the devil's favour, supporting it with quotations from the Scriptures.

An injunction to study the Scriptures more thoroughly was the reply, and to test all by the new Commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." "If there are suggestions that you should do anything contrary to this teaching, it is the devil, but if we endeavour to serve God by serving man, will you not be the channel through which this may be achieved?" Looking back, I can most honestly testify that in every communication where co-operation has been necessary, the desire to assuage the sufferings of humanity has been uppermost.

Certain rules were made to which I willingly acquiesced. Séances were forbidden. There was to be no attempt to obtain messages under any circumstances whatever; all would be given

spontaneously, thus allowing the doctor to decide who might approach me for the purposes of communication, and I was desired to abstain from reading any books on the subject of psychical research, mediumistic development, or theosophical teaching ; the reason being that I was too sensitive to attend a séance without danger ; that it was better, at this stage, for a responsible being to have control over the number and sort of would-be communicators until I had more discernment and ability to keep the frivolous or undesirable company at a distance. And, as I was in a position to receive direct teaching, it was more satisfactory to be taught exclusively by one mind, and more convincing to myself to compare such teaching with current literature later on.

I was told that in the future I should come across many who, like myself, lived under conscious guidance from the "unseen," and, in course of time, I gradually found myself drawn into a circle of people, of all sects and denominations, living and working in co-operation with "the other side" and often with the widest philanthropic interests. Some told me these guides took the form of angels, and others the spirits of discarnate friends and relations, but there was a certain reserve on the subject owing to the ignorant and often unkindly criticism and denunciations, and, until the exigencies of

the bereaved in the late war forced confidence, comparatively few had the courage to advance convictions that would have entailed argument and disputations in time that was valuable. I have heard this called the greatest freemasonry in existence; certainly it was amazing to see how much had been achieved for the common good of humanity by these psychic workers of twenty, thirty and forty years' standing.

There was another discarnate personality who wrote a series of essays through me for my own benefit. He and the doctor were quite distinct in appearance, character and handwriting; the doctor, of course, I knew, but the other was a complete stranger, and it was long before I stumbled upon evidence that proved his identity.

Their intentions differed. The doctor invariably gave practical advice and communications which called for practical results, while the "philosopher" confined himself to explanations of certain developments and theorised on much that was fast becoming fact.

There were chance communicators who came with the doctor from time to time, but, after giving a few messages to be conveyed to their friends, or on the completion of some scheme which they were unable to carry out themselves, there was little or no interest beyond the concern for the object of their endeavours. But, in the case of the philosopher, the influence was quite

equal to that of the doctor, and continued regularly over a long period.

He volunteered no information in regard to himself. Unlike others who, almost without exception, would give me some proof by which they could be identified, and even details of the people I was called upon to help for the purpose of recognition, he was content to remain anonymous.

I could see him clearly, and the handwriting was decidedly characteristic; he was obviously a scholar. In due course, I knew him through this correspondence as a very real friend as distinct from others as in ordinary life, but it was not until two years later, when I came across a signed photograph in the drawing-room of a new acquaintance in London, that his identity was revealed. To me, it was conclusive evidence, further strengthened by the opinions volunteered by his old friends, several of whom I have since had the pleasure of meeting, that his letters were not only extraordinarily like in handwriting, but in style and in thought. Comparing these with real letters written in his earth life, there are certain little bits which are like his and unlike my other "spirit correspondents" or myself—apart from the handwriting—and the use of phraseology, a little obsolete and high-flown, was so foreign to my knowledge of language that on many occasions I have had to resort to the dictionary for enlightenment.

As an experiment in Inspirational Writing, he gave me some views on psychical research in relation to the Christian Faith, dealing mostly with the attitude taken by the orthodox that such inquiry is contrary to religion. Nearly all came word by word—sometimes I got a sentence mentally before it was written, but never was the point of any paragraph intelligible to me until I read it over. The effect is disjointed but the argument good. The whole paper lacks beauty and polish, and the author is obviously handicapped by the discrepancies of an imperfect machine, an inferior brain and limited education, but it has a characteristic style.

This experiment was made in response to the request of a friend for views on psychical research on three points: Is it right from the religious point of view? Is it practicable? And to what does it all lead? I had never definitely formed answers to these questions and, in my ignorance of the argument which he brought forward little by little, I expected a concise reason to be given in three short sentences. Instead, the paper ran to about three thousand words, and a friend and I became keenly interested to see what would come next in the series. It is in my handwriting, and the experience was similar to writing at dictation with a difficulty to get all the words distinct, and sometimes a feeling as if it were a little known language. I insert a letter written

by the friend who watched the development of this experiment :

“ MY DEAR—

“ The chapter on psychic development interests me because I have followed it from the first. At first I must say honestly I neither liked nor approved of the subject, but my personal affection for you compelled me to listen to you. After a while I was interested in spite of myself, and began to realise the worth of it. The paper you refer to is the one which I see now influenced me the most. I certainly suggested the experiment in 1917. As each paragraph was read to me, I was simply astounded, for without meaning to be rude, I never heard you argue like that, and I knew that you were then no writer. The ideas were new to us both. If it had come to-day I should not have been so astonished, but if I may say what I really think, this ‘ personality ’ has somehow taught you a great deal in more ways than one, and has even influenced your present handwriting. It is this sort of inspiration which attracts me most.

“ Yours affectionately,
“ M.”

I have three other criticisms on this production, the first given by a modern writer who

read it believing it to be a literary effort of my own :

“ The chief thing which strikes me is that the style is too heavy, too wordy, and not sufficiently crisp or emphatic—these lengthy sentences which rather suggest an eighteenth or nineteenth century treatise or an ecclesiastical subject in which the arguments have to be dissected and analysed with minute care— a *Daily Mail* leader-writer let loose on your article would improve it ! ”

The second opinion was written by a very old and intimate friend of the supposed author :

“ The thoughts, the English and the grouping remind me so much of ——— that one cannot doubt his collaboration with you—at least I myself do not feel a shadow of doubt.”

A literary friend, and a sceptic into the bargain, to whom I showed the manuscript last year, was struck by the dissimilarity between it and my own articles, and her impression was that the authors were entirely different personalities.

I receive valuable help from this source in everything concerning my literary work, the grouping of the cases, and suitable points to emphasise, or subjects to advance, but further than that he will not go, and advises that I should

counteract his inevitable influence as tutor by the study of modern writings, the exercise of independent judgment over and above anything he may suggest.

"I do not wish to merge your own individuality absolutely into mine, for I am of a past generation, and it is necessary to have the edge of to-day cutting sharply to the subject."

But he does not hesitate to criticise freely and give me ideas for essays :

"Keep it modern in its phraseology and do not allow my style to antique the setting. Neither must you be too curt and disjointed, for that is, at present, your besetting sin, if I may call it so ! An essay should be a series of rings—each perfect and each adjoining without break, polished to perfection, and linking together to form a dependable chain, its strength lying in the accuracy and mechanism of each little circle."

It was he who desired me to send my articles for the consideration of the editor of the *Nineteenth Century And After*, against the advice, with a single exception, of all my friends, who said it was courting a blank refusal. He strengthened this advice by predicting that the first article would be accepted over a year before

its publication, or, indeed, of the Editor's decision. This I cannot quote, as it is still in the hands of a medical friend, in whom I have confided various predictions before the possibility of their fulfilment for the last seven years. The success of the second article was also predicted before it was written in May and June, 1918—in July it was dispatched to the Editor and published the following September ; and so on.

I am well aware that the identity of this personality is not sufficiently well attested to carry great weight with the general public. Too much is dependent on my testimony, the word of a single individual ; and the rule of adequate testimony is not one that can be ignored by a conscientious student who has the interests of the subject at heart. But I cannot omit the account of an experience which has played so great a part in the development of my understanding nor exclude an expression of gratitude for patient and systematic explanations of so much that mystified an unformed mind.

What puzzled me greatly at an early date were messages from the living, from spirits who were still incarnate in a physical body. They were all subconscious ; that is to say, while the thoughts were intentional there was no intention that I should receive, through the means of inspirational writing, a letter which was then perhaps only mentally decided and still

unwritten ; or even a desire involving my co-operation, yet unvoiced. It is common enough now for me to be aware beforehand of the contents of my letters, dispatched but undelivered, and, although there is a form of clairvoyance which gives the outcome of schemes barely conceived, I believe this tapping of surrounding vibrations by a sensitive to be the true explanation of many accurate prognostications of the immediate future so often placed to the credit of the unseen helpers.

Curiously enough, spontaneous messages from the living are more satisfactory than prearranged experiments. There seems to be a necessary attunement at the psychological moment which at present eludes investigation. In one case, sympathy will place two minds *en rapport*, in another, a mutual interest has the same effect, but at critical times and especially when sympathy and interest are increased to anxiety, the stream of communication from one mind to another is effectually stemmed. On the other hand extraordinarily accurate information comes from communicators in whom one has neither sympathy nor interest. The whole subject of thought transference is peculiarly elusive, but I believe now that it is the key to my mediumship.

It attracted me from the very first. If a human being could respond to vibrations of thought in such a way as to produce visible results, such as

automatic or inspirational writing, here was something in line with the scientific discoveries of the day and which, when once recognised as a talent to be perfected with practice, would engage the attention of the positive minds whose very interest would claim systematic work from those human machines who were naturally fitted for it. Thought could be exploited because, although requiring the vehicle of a brain to produce visible manifestations, the brain could be that of another.

These experiences extended to telepathic hypothesis north, south, east and west of the two hemispheres on which we exist and, naturally, shook my faith in discarnate spirits for a little, and even now the importance of thought vibrating round us cannot be exaggerated in my opinion, but the continual development of a keener discernment enables me to see (or feel) the difference between the personalities when receiving a thought message, and I must confess that I now extend the belief in Telepathy still further—to the spirits of the discarnate.

Apart from all proofs of identity I can recognise familiar discarnate personalities in exactly the same way as I do those still in the body; and further, I can see no manner of difference in the mode of communication.

"How strange!" I wrote in the very early stages of development before I knew anything

about telepathy, "I am thinking all this and you write what I think." It was an old lady who had discovered that she was dead and was able to impress this fact on me in writing closely resembling her own and partly in a foreign language with which my acquaintance is but the slightest. And this is what I believe to be the faculty of perceptive mediumship, a question of a natural sensitiveness to vibrations set up by thought and equivalent to the musical talent by which a musician is able to distinguish the vibrations created by sound. As a composer can arrange a melody in visible form of notes, so can a writing medium clothe the impressions given by thought in words intelligible to the reader.

A few lines were given me just the other day by an unknown correspondent. The writing is small and fine, of the Italian school, rather like that of the middle of the last century—one comes across it in old books, the ink brown with age—I give it as it is obviously intended merely as an opinion and not as an infallible utterance. Opinions are as varied and diverse on the other side as on this; the outlook remains personal.

"I would like to write with you for a little while to tell you my idea of spirit communication. I think, from my point of view—that is, from the point of view of a discarnate spirit—that there is not the remotest possibility of its

ever becoming general. At present there is the impetus from the bereaved and from the young men who have passed over in their full strength. The latter pass over fully conscious, or, at least, on regaining consciousness, fully aware of the life they have left. Their whole interest is centred on environment and human beings from whom they have been torn and naturally they cling to the half-done task. Then, the bereaved on their side, resent their loved ones being taken from the familiar scenes of activity and the mutual longing draws the two together into natural communion, hence the present development of psychic experiences to-day.

“In normal times there is more preparation for the future and less resentment, for death comes, when not by accident, as a natural event and, in the case of old age, there is more of the personality on this side towards the end of life than there is on earth—and it is like waiting in a place prepared for the loved ones to follow. And so, the necessary incentive to communicate with earth is absent and the bereaved resigned and content to await the future.

“This is perhaps discouraging to you who, with others, are working to establish Communication, but in a little while you will see it is not required and the whole of psychic

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investigation (barring the communication of natural psychics) will become a science and left to the few to decide: as in other discoveries the matter of spiritual law will be studied by a handful of men. It will be knowledge of, primarily, ether, vibratory manifestations in the ether and all pertaining to what has formerly been called the spiritual planes. And further, the laws dealing with life on this plane which deal very largely with that of the earth plane will become intelligible. All this will be found to be ruled by *thought* and the next step in the world's development will be that of *mentality* which will, in time, overrule the importance of matter—rather, matter and physics will slip into their right place, subservient to the undying principle in man and this will be generally understood and acknowledged.”—Dated, January 1919.

**TELEPATHY AS A NATURAL MEANS
OF COMMUNICATION**

TELEPATHY AS A NATURAL MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

TELEPATHY, or the transference of thought from one person to another without the agency of the recognised organs of sense, is a branch of experimental psychology which opens up a vast and unlimited field of inquiry.

The late Mr. F. W. H. Myers held the opinion that this mental action, being independent of the physical body, indicated some hope of the persistence of mind and memory after death, and considered that a fuller understanding of laws governing telepathic communication would lead to a better comprehension of the spiritual side of things.

“That same direct influence of mind on mind, which we show *in minimis* would, if supposed operative *in maximis*, be a form of stating the efficacy of prayer, the communion of saints, or even the operation of a Divine Spirit.”

The majority of people have not given sufficient study to the subject to afford a complete justification of such a wide outlook, but there is considerable interest shown in the questions

that frequently arise as to the validity of telepathic communication which are outside their own experience. It is apparent that many are still at the stage which demands more evidence to demonstrate clearly that thought is a faculty that man may exercise perceptibly on others, with the hope for further evidence that may eventually lead, without undue credulity, to the supposition that a faculty so essentially a mental (or spiritual) part of man's being, may persist and and be practicable after the mind is divested of matter.

In early days of psychical research, the fact that communications, believed to be from the unseen world, could be traced sometimes to the mental action of a human being upset certain preconceived ideas that all similar communications originated in a spiritual source or from a discarnate entity. Some people went further and declared that, this being the case, all these communications originated in the minds of other human beings, whether we could prove it or not, and swept away the hope that there was ever any likelihood of a conscious, though discarnate, personality at work. Now, it is more generally acknowledged that, if we are to give a fair consideration to a succession of telepathic experiences, it is necessary to admit the possibility that some of them may originate in the thoughts of discarnate personalities equally with those of the incarnate,

otherwise a great deal of evidence which cannot be traced to a human or incarnate source is cast aside as inexplicable, and the value of investigating and comparing the possible origin of such evidence with other more easily proved is lost.

In everyday life, an elementary form of telepathy is indicated by a mental anticipation of what some one else is going to say next ; or by an impression that such and such is the case which is perhaps verified later on by a correspondent. An individual with clairvoyant or clairaudient powers will receive a more definite revelation which will be either of a visionary or of an auditory nature ; while a by no means uncommon occurrence is a vivid dream of the exploits of an intimate friend or relation in extreme danger at or about the time of action.

Children are often unconscious experts. I have one small friend who used to win prodigiously at a game called " Happy Families." The game consists of guessing what cards are held by opponents, and, through an accurate conjecture, to gather the various members of these Happy Families into united groups, success depending on the number and the speed with which the object is attained. I asked the child how it was she invariably guessed right. " Oh," she said, " I just think ' Where is Mr. Bun the baker ? ' for a second, and then I know who has him." I tried to stop this by omitting to arrange my cards

at all, and refrained from even a glance at them before she made her requests, and, by so doing, arrested her progress successfully. Her mother tells me that she has often tried an identical experiment and has been equally successful, but adds the information that the child would invariably ask aloud for what she wanted, pause for a moment while everyone instinctively looked at the cards they held, and then add the name of the person who had it.

To what extent the concentration of thought can be carried depends entirely on the individual. In two cases personally known to me, students have seen, in a dream, the contents of examination papers on a certain subject a short time before the day on which the examination was held, but not, however, before the questions were decided. Both these people are highly intellectual, and this foresight, which was undoubtedly valuable, crowned months of exceedingly hard study, and, in one case, absolute necessity for success was an additional impetus. But, anyhow, such concentration is exceptional, and the action of personal thought with results ensuing is more commonly demonstrated.

My own experiences lead me to believe that a thought directed to a certain individual will fall in the mental environment of that individual as an arrow from the bow of a good marksman. And, should the thought be powerful, the

vibrations will continue for some time after, according to the force with which the thought was projected.

Possibly because inspirational writing has been a means chosen for me as a suitable method of receiving communications from another world, I sometimes receive messages from people in this world in the same manner. A feeling comes over me to make a note of something, and before I have quite realised what I am doing, a sentence is rapidly written, occasionally in characteristic handwriting.

In ignorance of the value of these thought messages, I have, in the past, omitted to get many of them properly attested, and have, unfortunately, cast aside much that, taken as tiny bits of a great whole, would build up quite a strong wall of evidence for critical readers. But I have a few verified examples which I am at liberty to give with the full permission of the people concerned. They are for the most part trivial and, with two exceptions, spontaneous, but they are chosen from a succession of similar messages which should obviate the assumption of chance coincidences.

The life of an average human being is composed mostly of insignificant details, but what to others is trivial may be of supreme importance to the person in question. At one time I was receiving messages from a man who was in the

midst of incessant fighting, all of which were exclusively personal. It was remarked, "Why did he not send me some news worth having from such an important part of the line, and let me know the result of the fighting before it became common property?" I can only say that his desire to inform me of his safety in the midst of great danger was far more natural than the wish to give information of the German advance, and my interest in the actual events of war was considerably less than my anxiety for his personal safety.

There are several of my intimate friends with whom I am in constant mental communication, but friendship in itself is not the determining factor in all cases. There appears to be a natural psychological element which mentally attunes the two, which is capable of development, but which, if non-existent, I believe cannot be acquired.

One instance of a natural attunement between almost complete strangers and myself was shown in the following message, which was as unexpected as was the suggestion it contained. "Would you like to see a friend this afternoon at four o'clock? Fleetwood." There was no reason to expect these people, but they did call on their way to another house in the same vicinity, and discussion subsequently proved that I received the message about the same time that

they were making their plans. To quote a line written in corroboration by Miss Fleetwood: "We called on Miss Monteith—we decided it during the morning. D. H. Fleetwood."

Another message of a later date from a member of the same family was equally accurate, but the thought it conveyed was only in the mind of the individual and had not been uttered. "I am going away and want to see you before I go. N. Fleetwood." I must acknowledge that further acquaintance with this family led to a most sympathetic relationship between us.

A very common occurrence is the anticipation of letters to myself and their contents when, from the date, they must have been on their way to me by post. One had an unprecedented beginning, a familiar nickname being used in place of the customary "Miss Monteith." The handwriting of the automatic message denoted who it was from, and the date of this premature communication was that of the day after the letter had been posted, and nearly three weeks before it arrived at its destination.

A different form of telepathy has asserted itself more than once by the actual feeling of a definite physical injury. In one case this was accompanied by a strong impression that a certain friend on active service was wounded. My hand became momentarily painful and disabled in a similar manner to that described in his letter

which reached us the following day. This experience verges on psychometry in an effect which is produced by touching some article worn by the individual in question, but I had nothing in my hand that belonged to him to justify that theory, and the only explanation is the energy of thought vibrating for some days, the vibrations being strong enough to affect me with a vivid "feeling of otherness," as Sir William Barrett so aptly describes it.

This "feeling of otherness," which invariably discloses the identity of a communicator personally known to me, apart from anything else, was fully indicated on another occasion when the actual message was good news and the feeling, misery. A very sympathetic woman of my acquaintance apparently sent me a communication to the effect that there was a certainty of promotion for her husband which would involve a change. This was not at all unlikely, but, as it was by no means to be deplored, I was astonished at the impression I received simultaneously of extreme unhappiness on her part for which I could not account. For many years telepathy between us had mutually proved extraordinarily correct, and this was so irreconcilable that I took the precaution of dating this experience and did not write to her on the subject, knowing that she was certain to tell me of such an important step. Shortly after another impression superseded the

first, contradicting the original information. We met a few weeks later and discovered that although she had quite unintentionally conveyed the message to me, it was correct. I received it on the actual day on which the likelihood of a new and better appointment for her husband in the immediate future was made known to them privately. Before she was able to follow up her intention of writing to me, the appointment was frustrated by a most unusual circumstance which no one could have foreseen, and, all the time, she was suffering from nervous depression caused by a slight indisposition which had nothing whatever to do with the case in point.

The first telepathic message from another friend proved itself useful and was the beginning of many others from her with equal success. This was written in the third person which, for some reason or other, was characteristic of her early communications. "Mrs. W. sends her love and will meet you at the theatre." I came to the conclusion that, as there was no other way of letting me know, she had deliberately tried to impress me with the fact that her plans were unavoidably changed, and I acted accordingly, in spite of the arrangement we had made to travel together by a certain train and go to the play. But that was not so. She was worried because unforeseen circumstances prevented her from keeping to the original arrangement and hoped

that, not finding her at the station, I should act independently and go on to the theatre where she intended to meet me. On another occasion her intentions were forestalled in the same way. "Mrs. W. fears—will you run round (one) afternoon," was written and explained by Mrs. W., when I told her of it, by an overwhelming premonition which came over her, and which caused her such intense mental suffering that she decided to fix an afternoon without delay when we could talk it over. It was a most unusual course for her to take, and about the only exception I have ever known her make with regard to her habit of extreme reserve on any matter of personal feelings.

These are typical illustrations of a close communion between myself and kindred spirits in the greatest sense of the word, but it does not follow that I am able to receive messages from anybody who chooses to try to transfer a thought, nor has any matter ever come to my knowledge without a full intention that I should know in the mind of the people themselves. It is not a faculty through which one may become aware of others' inmost thoughts, which would undoubtedly lead to mutual discomfort, and I am of the opinion a feeling of reserve on any subject acts automatically and closes the line of communication of thought as effectually as, in everyday intercourse, silence will cover innate reserve. I say this advisedly after many years of experiences,

supplemented by experiments made by friends with whom this telepathy is most marked, to see if they could withhold matters that would eventually concern me personally until they chose to reveal them. And in this they were always successful. If they require my services it appears that I am rung up sharply, so to speak ; if it is a question of personal intentions which can be carried out independently of me, whether I am included in the scheme or not, I am left in peace. The interest, I believe, however slight, must be mutual.

When messages take the form of characteristic handwriting which satisfactorily discloses the identity of the personality at work, it is advisable to arrange experiments whenever it is possible to have these demonstrated. It is seldom that two separate communicators who have proved themselves to be capable of impressing their style of handwriting in addition to their thoughts are staying in the same town, but on one occasion this happened to be the case, and we seized the first opportunity that presented itself.

There were just the two experimenters besides myself. One of them, "Ella," often and successfully sent me thought messages, but the first that arrived was unintentional. "Have you any messages for me?—Ella" was written one morning by me in the midst of ordinary correspondence and, although with extreme rapidity and with no

expectation of any communication from her, in a replica of her handwriting. I met her the following day, and her explanation was that she was thinking of me at the time I got the writing, and anxious to know if I had good news from a mutual friend on active service who occasionally enclosed messages for her.

On another occasion when I had not met her for a few weeks owing to a serious illness which prevented her from receiving any visitors, I wrote the following: "*Vous pouvez venir me voir aujourd'hui, si vous voulez. Reçu une lettre de Jack.*" I fully expected a note from her in course of the morning but none came. The next day I called to inquire and was allowed to see her for a short time. She then told me that, on the morning before, as she was feeling stronger, she wanted me to come and had every intention of sending her French maid with a message, but the doctor's visit intervened and he vetoed the suggestion as unwise. The message about the letter was also correct.

As regards the other experimenter, Mr. D., he had from time to time sent me communications. They were invariably short but always very much to the point. Perhaps one of the most satisfactory I ever received from him was *à propos* of an incident which caused us all some anxiety. He had been given an important commission after much hard work and expenditure of personal

effort to secure it. As his services were not required immediately, he left the country he was in and came over to his people, who were then in England. I was staying with the family at the time and saw for myself a private telegram from headquarters advising him to return at once and explaining that there was danger of the commission being cancelled owing to his absence. This telegram had been delayed for four days and the earliest moment that he could possibly arrive and report himself was five days later still. Things looked black and he started on his journey fully expecting his dismissal. Of course, we knew when he was likely to be at his destination and we were reassured by a message I received late on the day he should have arrived—" I am not dismissed." This was signed with his name. We all recognised who it was from by the handwriting, and it was happily verified by a letter from him received in due course, and dated the same day as my message.

Judging from these, and other equally satisfactory instances, we naturally hoped for great results immediately on settling down to the experiment. Both " Ella " and Mr. D. were as interested and enthusiastic as myself, but it took a little time before the pencil I had in my hand wrote anything at all. Mr. D's previous messages had been sent in moments of excitement, and at high pressure, and he was of the opinion that some

strong impetus was necessary to give sufficient vibratory energy to affect me. But a few sentences were written, not the actual one which he was endeavouring to impress on me, and which was inconsequent, but indicating his hopes for the coming summer. They were, he confessed, uppermost in his mind, and the handwriting in the first instance decided their origin.

"My own idea is to get back to England this summer, if possible. But I am not sure I can get permission. The only (way?) will be to get the necessary——. We have to get special permission to go over to England often, but family affairs can be pressing, and being a——, ask on account of (name given), bring up an excuse and put it through."

At this point the writing became illegible and changed. "Let me write. Is it possible that —— (name given) is trying to write?" And the answer to my remark "Is that you, Ella?" was given mentally and recorded by the pencil "Yes." The style of the writing, although much enlarged, resembled that of "Ella," and then followed immediately "I want to say something," which, although not so characteristically written as his previous communication, was correctly attributed to Mr. D. by me before he spoke. A slight pause ensued, while I waited for him to say it, but the pencil wrote in "Ella's" style, very much enlarged, the word "*Music*." She acknow-

ledged her thoughts had wandered to a musical composition that she intended to play the following day—a flagrant want of concentration, but one which accentuated the sympathy between us, as we were both concerned in that performance.

These, and other slight but equally correct results, were the outcome of a single experiment with only a limited amount of time at our disposal, but were sufficient to convince us that the previous communications I had received from them, at distances which varied from five to five hundred miles between us, had not been a series of chance coincidences depending on mere conjectures. Nor was the distinctive handwriting, the chief point of the experiment, an insignificant test for distinguishing the personality.

Another experiment was tried with the Mrs. W. I have already mentioned as having transferred her thoughts, on many occasions, to me, and another friend, Mrs. X., as an interested witness. Mrs. X's interest lay in the fact that while we could never trace the slightest telepathic connection between us, her husband, who had passed over several years previously, had given me numerous proofs of identity, many of which being known to her could, of course, have been conveyed from her mind to mine. .

There were incidents which suggested a possibility that my psychic perception of his presence was not at fault, and that he continued his

endeavours to prove that he retained a complete memory of his earth-life, but they were in the minority. One was the affirmation of a certain action unknown to me, and contrary to his wife's supposition, which was verified at a much later date; another, a prediction he made concerning some business matters, which might have been foreseen by him, but which was not even hoped for by any other; and a third was a promise made to me privately that he would give a message for his wife the following Saturday. I fully expected him to communicate that message to me, and was intensely disappointed not to receive any on the day mentioned, but he did better. He entrusted it to a mutual friend on the Saturday promised, who sent it to Mrs. X. She appreciated it greatly for the fact that neither of us knew that this lady possessed any psychic gifts nor had we ever discussed the subject with her.

To return to the experiment, it was arranged principally for the purpose of getting evidential thought manifestations from Mrs. W. with Mrs. X. as a witness. As usual I could get nothing at all from Mrs. X. except a bare "Yes" or "No," which she gave mentally in answer to some simple questions which we tried in desperation. Mrs. W.'s thoughts on the contrary were transferred immediately without delay, and my full attention became fixed on her and what she

was going to think next. In the middle of a sentence there was a pause—my hand was arrested in mid-air for a moment and then in a totally different style, wrote the word, "My," and paused again. By this time my attention was thoroughly aroused, for I thought she was trying an experiment of her own and I waited until the pencil moved again, when there was written, very deliberately, "Wife wants something, R. F. X.," Mr. X.'s initials. There had been no indication of his presence until this moment so far as I was concerned, but the message, although unexpected, was not improbable, but an explanation from Mrs. X. was forthcoming. She said that Mrs. W. and I were so absorbed in our experiment that she thought she would try one of her own and resolved to attract my notice to her through a strong concentration of will, and was determined to arrest the stream of thought from Mrs. W. which was being registered by the pencil. Either this took the form of a message from her husband or he had become aware of her desire and passed it on to me. It is impossible to prove, but in drawing any conclusion it should be remembered that there has been evidence pointing to a close communion between Mr. and Mrs. X., and moreover, in messages which he gave relating to episodes known to her and tested in such a way as to prove they evolved from her mind, it was his

persistence, influencing me, which proved stronger than her arguments every time.

It is disappointing but true, that in the case of a great friendship the gulf of space is not always bridged naturally. In the case of one of my much loved friends, a Miss R., in spite of the fact that she was a highly evolved psychic and worked indefatigably with an old member of the Psychical Research who continues activities from a higher sphere, we were never able to send or receive thought-messages from each other except with this discarnate spirit as a messenger. His personality was well established to several others besides ourselves, and of course both she and I were perfectly aware of his co-operation on many occasions. But, irritating as it is to be told by the psychically blind and deaf critics that one cannot be sure of the identity of an "unseen" personality, for the sake of the subject we were ready to work for some time in accordance with the rule that unconscious telepathy between her and myself explained everything. In one case, however, this supposition may be allowed to give way, as the communicator desired what to both seemed impracticable. The facts are as follows :

I had left London, having said good-bye to Miss R. for, as we then thought, several months, but within a few weeks I was back again, just for a short time, on a business matter, and, knowing

that Miss R. had arranged to spend that particular month in the country, I did not hope to see her. We seldom or never corresponded. I was desired one morning, by the spirit of her friend, to go to her at once, an urgent reason for so doing was given. Not only was she ill, but difficulties had arisen in which I could be of assistance. Naturally, I demurred, my reason being that she was not within reach. He assured me she had not left town, and begged me to go. I went and found it was as he had said. She had remained in London longer than she had intended, she was not only ill, but in difficulties which I was able to take off her hands. And, to the communication made to me was added one to her from him the same morning, telling her to send for me, and assuring her that I was near enough to call. This was only one of many similar experiences, and the story is known to others who agree that the details of the difficulties that faced her were of so unusual a character as to preclude a surmise on my part, or an anticipation that might have arisen from unconscious telepathy.

Another case in which the transference of thought from a discarnate individual was again debatable, was an inquiry made by an officer, recently deceased, regarding a matter of which his widow declared he could not be in doubt. She herself was psychic in an indefinable sort of way, but sufficiently so to be sure of the persistence of

his full personality and guidance, and had no desire for any further communications to supplement those that she received herself. During an afternoon call, it was evident to me that he was with her, and he impressed me to say that he was anxious to know if she had received all the money due to her. She informed me that he was most methodical, he had been careful to leave all his documents in perfect order in case of his sudden death, and there had been no difficulties in any of her monetary affairs. He impressed me further with the fact that it was some extra money which she ought to have received, and we should find allusion to that money in a packet of letters confined by a broad, red rubber band. She contested this hotly, but in spite of her certainty that he *must* know that her business matters were all satisfactory, and a consequent disbelief in the validity of his message, I prevailed on her to bring down a dispatch box. She looked through it hurriedly, only to find a few bundles of letters, and all of them enclosed in narrow rubber bands, and she was quite decided that I had made a mistake. The next morning, however, she came to tell me that, after my departure, she found a small packet at the bottom of the box, the only one she had with the distinctive broad, red rubber band. It contained a few letters addressed to him, which had evidently been delivered on the day that he was killed, and were

unopened. One was from her, acknowledging a cheque for a large sum of money, which the Government had granted for some extra expenses that had been incurred, in answer to a request made by him in a registered letter, to acquaint him of its arrival, immediately.

There was no desire made on either side for further communication, nor were there any actual proofs of identity given. In this case, my perception of his presence was visionary, and as he was personally known to me, a description was unnecessary. I had, however, a sensation of severe physical injury to a part of my body which, I was told some time later, was the locality of the wound to which he succumbed.

Telepathy is indisputable. As a means of communication between the living it is by no means uncommon. The question remains: If this transference of thought cannot logically be confined to the living, being apparently independent of matter, is it not fair to suppose that such communion may be not only a possible but natural link which the death of the physical body cannot destroy ?

THE SURVIVAL OF MEMORY AFTER
DEATH

THE SURVIVAL OF MEMORY AFTER DEATH

THERE is an old legend which still holds influence over many to-day when other tales of equal antiquity and value have long since been discarded. It tells of how the souls of the departed drink of the Waters of Lethe and straightway forget their earthly existence. This thought is mainly responsible for the fear of death, for the fear of death is, in reality, the fear of eternal separation, which is inevitable if oblivion is to be our future state. If memory of the earth life is entirely dependent on that part of the physical body we call the brain, then indeed is the legend justified, but we are a long way from proving that, and, to draw a fair conclusion from the ever increasing mass of evidence, it is obvious that something persists, consciously endeavouring to manifest itself and, in a few cases, there appears to be positive proof of survival.

Survival need not necessarily include memory. Were there no indications of a desire to communicate with us we might suppose that the whole interest would be centred on the wonders of

the spiritual world to the exclusion of old earth ties. But the fact that communication is desired speaks for itself, and, in the face of this, the continuity of a spiritual law of affinity is more probably a feature of a happier existence.

A short memory is not characteristic only of the dead. If we consider how elusive it is in life, and with what difficulty old memories are awakened, more sympathy will be shown with those on the other side when disappointing messages, which are perhaps distorted out of recognition in the transit through another's mind or brain, are received. The delicacy of telepathic communication, to take but a normal method, can only be realised through practical experience, and like experiments with the living make one wonder how the dead ever manage to convey sensible messages at all. It is no good underestimating the difficulties of communication, and not the least is the lapse of memory on the part of the inquirer with regard to certain points raised by the communicating spirit. Grief and anxiety are to blame for an impatience which is so apparent to a disinterested outsider. Certain tests are demanded, and no mercy is shown when the response is vague or false. On the other hand, tests are spontaneously given which are contradicted or unrecognised and deliberately cast aside until, as it sometimes happens, the inquirer comes across an old letter or a picture which

revives the incident in his memory and he realises that there was something in it.

A slight instance of this was at the time a very great disappointment to a friend of mine. One of the proofs of remembrance volunteered by the discarnate spirit was an allusion to the circumstances attending the gift of a book. The book was described by the medium as a "volume of sonnets." As there had been a mistake in choosing the colour of the binding it had arrived in a blue cover, a colour which my friend detested, and this raised a great discussion with the result that blue was carefully avoided when other presents were chosen. With that incident in her mind she demanded what was the colour of that particular book. The medium replied she could distinguish no words but, to her, everything went brown, and from that she supposed the book was brown. Incredible though it may appear, it was a long, long time before it was realised that, as the book was a collection of sonnets by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, the answer given was a little far-fetched, but very characteristic of a man who used all his wits to convince her of his identity in every conceivable way, and with particular regard to the possible transference of his thoughts to the medium. The medium was totally uneducated in every sense of the word, and I very much doubt if she had ever heard of any of our famous poets.

I remember an occasion when my excess of zeal

for scientific proof was the cause of impatience which I regret to this day. I was given a communication in writing from a deceased officer who begged me to tell his widow that he still existed, hoping that this message, coming directly from him, would allay her grief and raise her out of a miserable condition of hopelessness. He expressed surprise when I asked for proofs of identity to accompany his statement. He told me who he was, the particulars of his death and a great deal about his family history, but as I had previous knowledge of all this, I suspected the activity of my own mind. In answer to my remark, "You say you are Captain A.," he wrote, "I am not Captain A. I am Major—Major, I tell you—Major," underlining the word Major with considerable force. I knew, as a fact, that he had not attained his majority, and concluded that the message was merely imaginary, and cast it aside as worthless. A few months later I discovered my mistake. The man had died a captain, but owing to certain circumstances Government had given him the rank of major posthumously in order that a larger pension might be ensured for his family. As is often the case in chance communications, he never sent another message.

In the face of a single communication or the absence of any indication that such is desired, many are inclined to believe in the existence of

some irresistible spiritual force which attracts the spirit far away from earth after death. This theory is the antithesis of the earth's magnetic attraction to the physical body, but it has no real foundation and is, as yet, unproven.

The strongest force we know here is love, and, for my part, judging from the many cases I have known, personally, when the whole desire of the discarnate spirits has been to comfort the bereaved—to reassure them of continued existence—to convince them that there is no eternal separation—and often to guide them, as of old, I am forced to believe in the persistence of love as a dominating principle in the law of attraction in the spiritual world.

Actual communication is not always possible, nor, when possible, does it appear to be the sole occupation of departed souls.

An unverifiable portion of the messages deals with allusions to work that the discarnate are given to carry out, which would not only account for absence, but provide a logical hypothesis that strikes the happy mean between a state of forgetfulness in celestial spheres and the questionable joy of hanging on to the fringe of another's existence in this world with no fixed purpose. I believe those who work regularly near the earth to have a very decided motive in the interests of humanity.

These communications come in different ways.

Some personalities will use the means known as automatic writing exclusively; others can be heard speaking, and others, again, can be distinctly seen and accurately described or even recognised at a future date in a picture. Those who are accustomed to practise communication seem able to use any method best suited to the medium, and, in addition, they can impress their wishes on a likely subject during the hours of sleep. But, at the earliest stages of mediumistic development there is often an indefinable feeling that the spirit of a friend is near and it is recognised because of a sense of familiarity. There is something intangible, inexplicable, that we have experienced before, and to which something in us responds.

What exactly constitutes recognition is unknown. We do recognise human beings, of course, by the appearance, but there is also a feeling of personality to which some people are sensitive, and this feeling may possibly determine the fact that some human beings are kindred spirits and others the reverse; it arouses likes and dislikes between complete strangers before there is time to discover any reasonable grounds for either.

These people who feel, intuitively, an effect that different individuals have on them are sensitive, but not necessarily psychic, nor are they of any particular character or temperament.

I have heard this feeling of personality acknowledged to by more than one hard-headed scientist, as well as by the artistic and average human beings who have not the advantage of the methodical mental training which is, perhaps, productive of more accurate judgment.

When telepathy is better understood it may be proved that each individual possesses an exclusively personal pitch and rhythm of thought, that personality itself consists not only in what a man thinks, but how he thinks—his especial manipulation, so to speak, of the vibrations through which he conveys his ideas—and that this, in itself, will produce an effect, attractive or repulsive, on his fellow creatures, which will account for a natural sort of caste, dividing members of a large community into groups of kindred spirits, independently of family ties.

It is significant to hear so many of the bereaved remark that they know there are moments when their dead are with them. We may not always take this statement as being quite true, but the fact remains that they themselves are sure and that no argument, however powerful, can shake their belief. Something has happened to which the whole being has vibrated with recognition, and, if hysteria be out of the question, one looks for the cause that has produced so remarkable an effect.

I was greatly struck with this attitude of

conviction in a case where the slight proofs that were given were of far less consequence to the lady who related her experience to me than the strong impression she received of the identity of the literally unseen presence. It was from beginning to end a question of feeling. She felt that a certain discarnate spirit was speaking to her, and the information he volunteered, unverifiable for the time being, was supplemented by a statement that a book belonging to him was in a particular corner of a book-case in a certain room of his old home. On making inquiries, this proved to be correct. Not only had the position of the book-case been changed from the wall of his dressing-room, but all the books had been taken out and rearranged since his death, a fact quite unknown to the lady with whom he had communicated, and, in this book in the corner described, there was a passage underlined which bore directly on the subject of his conversation. Without realising the value of such a message, not only as an initial step towards identification, but implying, as it did, knowledge of an event subsequent to his death, she was utterly convinced of her own perceptive recognition, although in her opinion, being of an intensely practical turn of mind, it was unreasonable. As she said, "How could I know who it was when there was nothing to be seen?"—a remark which has been made to me by others over and over again.

In receiving a communication from a discarnate spirit, this feeling of personality is, to the psychic, more decided. There is an impression of the character of the communicating entity—a feeling of age or youth, as the case may be, and even a sense of past relationship in connection with the person for whom the message is intended. This is something quite outside clairvoyance or clair-audience. One is aware also of past physical sufferings and the effect of accidents. When symptoms of the last illness are confirmed, I consider it a valuable basis for further investigation. So far as experience has led me at present, I believe these vibrations to be involuntary and impossible to withhold, while actual messages can be deliberately deceptive. In the case of the living I have invariably felt vibrations of pain when the fact of suffering has been otherwise unselfishly withheld, while thoughts that have been transferred to me have been determined entirely by the experimenter. And, in nine cases out of ten, messages follow and corroborate the identity of a spirit who has, involuntarily or not as it may be, conveyed to me the symptoms of his last physical sensations immediately on coming into my environment, and this, with very few exceptions, independently of any psychometry.

On one occasion the locality of the pain I felt in the course of receiving a message was such as

I knew to be utterly different from the symptoms of the man's last illness, and so definite, that inquiries were made on medical grounds, only to find that there was this particular pain during the moments that preceded decease, and that it was not a symptom of his malady. Subsequent communications verified decidedly this man's identity entirely to the satisfaction of his nearest friends, and was the beginning of a remarkable instance of beneficial co-operation between the two worlds.

Why it is that these old sensations of pain are revived independently of messages to that effect, and even when those on a totally different subject are being given, is hard to determine. It appears to be contrary to the wishes or even the knowledge of the communicator. There is no parallel in life: the discomfort of bygone illnesses is soon forgotten when once the bodily health is re-established. I was giving a message for a strange communicator one day when, after accurately diagnosing the fatal disease, I lost my voice completely while delivering the last few sentences. Curiously enough, this personality had suffered from an affection of the throat which resulted in temporary loss of voice, but very many years before his death.

With regard to feeling, again, a recent experiment was arranged because a Mr. X. had promised to "get something through" to prove that

he was still here sometimes. He was an indefatigable communicator who had given a series of messages which had convinced his people of his identity, but there was the suspicion that he had "gone on." This time he began by reminding his friend of a white rose, which conveyed nothing at all to her. "Think," he said, "think, and you will remember." And while she was obviously searching in her mind for the white rose, I felt myself change into some one else with one eye badly hurt and covered with a black patch. I described this instantly, and it was recognised as an old accident to the corner of the eye—Mr. X.'s eye—which was serious enough to require the protection of a shade. It had happened when he was abroad, many years back, and she only knew of it through correspondence, and, as far as she could tell, the matter had not entered her mind since.

Some may be of the opinion that I was merely tapping Mrs. X.'s subconscious memory of this incident, but I doubt if it is possible to convey such a feeling except from past experience. To a psychic it is something quite different from the perception of thought transference. I will give another instance.

There were three people in the room, including myself. My hostess I knew slightly; the other guest was a complete stranger. We had not met for any particular purpose, but the conversation

had turned to psychic subjects in which the interest was mutual. Suddenly my hostess, who is very mediumistic, said, "So and so has just come into the room and is standing by my chair." I could see something, and tried to corroborate her vision, but my description of the communicating personality was not in the least like her friend, and it became obvious that I was in touch with some one else. It was the spirit of a much older man. There was a feeling of detailed symptoms of a heart attack and subsequent heart failure, and an old trouble, bronchitis, was distinguished; at this, the other lady recognised her father. He tried to give proofs of memory and made allusion to a life full of memories which bewildered him when endeavouring to communicate. A hand was described, finely made with long fingers and beautiful filbert nails which, I was told, was that of his widow, and, finally, he expressed regret at having no opportunity of a talk with a man, younger than himself and of his daughter's generation, before he died. This man she took to be one of her brothers who was away from home at the time of his death, but it was firmly contradicted, and "a Guardsman's uniform" was given me, immediately recognised as that of another member of the family, an officer in the Guards, to whom the message was clearly appropriate. The case is interesting as an influence strong enough to counteract the joint

thoughts and expectations of two people besides myself who were prepared for manifestations of an entirely different character—I knew something of the cause of Mr. So-and-so's death—and to me the feeling of the heart attack and vibrations which conveyed the message for the Guardsman were distinct and different.

A mere evidential side of mediumship is the visualising of the etheric double of the physical body. These manifestations, in the case of the discarnate, can, of course, be compared with the "phantasms of the living," a subject which has already been so admirably dealt with by authorities as to call for no discussion here.

This etheric double, a counterpart of the physical body, does persist, and, to a certain extent, is a reassurance of future recognition. I have verified it over and over again.

Generally these appearances come in a flash, and, although one catches details that friends recognise, it is seldom that the vision is sufficiently prolonged to give a full description afterwards. Almost the first successful case of visualising came to me after I had seen a photograph of the man taken in profile, at an angle which gave the effect of an oval face and particularly a finely pointed chin. In my vision this man was my *vis-à-vis*, and I was sceptical when he told me who he was, seeing a heavy, square-jawed individual, and not by any means

so handsome as the photograph I knew. However, he repeated his name, and I then noticed he had an uncommonly loud voice. Relating this to his people, they corroborated the latter by telling me that, owing to this powerful organ, he was, in the old days, known as "the bull," and they showed me another photograph which, they said, resembled him more than the one I had seen. It was taken full-face, and the square jaw was unmistakable. Both these photographs are in existence. There were, of course, many other proofs to work on besides this, but the difference in the two aspects was striking, being entirely opposed to his likeness as I knew it. It is a coincidence that, while the Great War was never predicted to us, this personality advised and encouraged one member of the family to take up nursing, and by so doing she had so little spare time that she was forced to forgo all communication with him, being only able to receive his messages through automatic writing. Her talent for that was extraordinary; but she has never regretted following his advice, for the training she took enabled her to respond instantly to the call for competent nurses at the very beginning of hostilities.

Another incident which again demonstrated the remembrance or persistence of the physical outline is one which I regard as being, personally, not only one of the most convincing, but one

which proved most helpful to me in my private investigations. To begin with, it came as the fulfilment of a promise that a new personality would co-operate with me for a time. No explanation was forthcoming. I was told that this personality chose to disclose his identity in his own way, and he did so by showing himself so clearly that I was able to remember details of his appearance and, in particular, to notice a marked peculiarity of one of his limbs which, he informed me, was the result of an accident and not of disease. He said that by giving this description to a certain man in London, some one I knew, I could identify him. I did so, and after a little difficulty caused by a lapse of memory on the part of our mutual friend, but whose memory was awakened by two words alluding to a past incident given by this communicator, his identity was recognised.

Now, the sceptic will argue that, although I had never heard of this individual nor had I any reason to connect him with my friend in London, there is the chance that I could telepathically discern people with whom anyone I met had been acquainted. And in this I am not entirely at variance with the sceptic, although I think it is often a matter for argument, and especially in this particular case. There were many indications that it was an independent and active personality. He had a way of answering the

many questions I put to him that disposed entirely of the objection that I had guessed the answer, and much that he gave me proved accurate and interesting. It was a few years before I was able to verify one of his assertions, which was with regard to a minor detail of his family history, and was contradicted by all of his acquaintances I happened to know. Eventually, circumstances brought about a meeting with one of his near relations who was in a position to confirm his statement—one which was not generally known to outsiders and unknown to the friends of the deceased whom I had previously come across.

Another point which brings me to an interesting development of psychic investigation was the fulfilment of a promise he made, and turns one's attention to the possibility of direct mental influence being brought to bear on the people in this world from a different plane. Knowing of my hobby for collecting actual copies of the original manuscripts relating to episodes in the lives of people I had met, he said that, one way or another, he would get me the original account of a remarkable experience he had in early life. Time went on and as his relations did not offer me anything of the sort I was beginning to look on it as a forlorn hope. However, when I was calling one day on a lady with whom I had recently become acquainted, our conversation

turned to interesting documents and she brought out one of hers which, without a hint from me, she most generously gave me to copy. It contained the full account of my discarnate friend's experience as related by himself, taken down at the time by one of the audience word for word.

There are many experiences which will convince a psychic experimenter that an outsider, or one with little knowledge of the subject, may feel inadequate, but, on the other hand, the actual experience and the personality of the communicator can be emotionally unconvincing even when the matter is conclusive.

Of these two cases of visualising the first was personally convincing. I knew that I had not seen a photograph of this man except in profile, and the "loud voice" was, at the moment, an impressive reality, but apart from that, I was face to face with a visible personality who was determined to overcome my doubt as to his identity, and his determination made itself felt and carried the day.

The other instance was not nearly so convincing, although the evidence of the "peculiarity of one of his limbs" taken with the other details of personal appearance has been criticised as proof positive and by sceptics. It was a period of systematic work that eventually strengthened my belief in him, the correctness of his assertion and the fulfilment of his promise to get me an authentic

copy of his unique experience (which was given me by a friend of his friend who possessed the original document) finally assured me of the unreasonableness of my doubt. This is, of course, merely the psychic's point of view, the experimenter's own attitude towards manifestations which are sometimes extended over a period of months and even years when not limited to a single communication. The uninitiated are apt to believe that psychic experiences occur only in a state of trance or an extreme height of subliminal level.

When promises are kept it gives cause for thought. Not only is there implied knowledge of what is going on here, but the question arises as to the persistence of the action of a well-known factor in life, the influence of a stronger mind on others. We see it daily, an influence not merely of words but of something behind the words, and if this persists it may explain an impelling force which determines many of our actions and accounts for an inspiration which is often freely acknowledged.

Psychic workers often receive messages actually indicating the whereabouts of people in distress, and help given for this reason is invariably said, by the recipients, to have come as a direct answer to prayer. Without denying the reality of thoughts (prayers), and the possibility of their import being received unconsciously by one who

is merely attuned by sympathetic interest (Divine intervention through a natural law), some individuals work in the light of conscious guidance from discarnate spirits, whose interest, anxiety and knowledge, apart from anything else, point to a relationship which death could not sever.

A "coincidence" is the right description of the fulfilment of a promise when we cannot actually trace the master mind, but coincidences of this kind are common enough to be counted on as certainties, almost without exception, by regular psychic workers. I have in my mind one case which has been corroborated by documentary evidence to the last letter, and one which was entirely out of my power to help on, even if I so desired, but positive evidence was not forthcoming to establish the identity at the time. The story is as follows :

In the course of a conversation I had with an individual who maintained a strictly scientific attitude of mind towards psychic manifestations, the remark was made that although a certain woman, known to me only by hearsay, stated that she was in receipt of indisputable proofs of identity from an intimate friend who had passed over, she had no real grounds for saying so, the proofs received being indifferent. I do not remember feeling much interest until later when I received certain communications in automatic

writing purporting to come from the spirit in question, emphatically stating that he had proved his identity to her and promising that I should receive verification. Incidentally he gave me his rank in the Service at the time of his death and a very fair description of this woman and her character which I acknowledge to be true now that I know her ; but the point of the message lay in the fact that to her he had given sufficient proof of his identity. After the lapse of two years, a written account of the full details were placed in my hand by a disinterested person, incidents of psychic interest bearing on my own experiences. And, although opinion may be divided, the numbers of investigators who find the evidence is good are well in the majority and I only wish I were at liberty to publish the details here, to confirm my message. I was able to ascertain also that these proofs had been received before my conversation with the sceptic who, no doubt, was perfectly honest in his opinion.

There is one more example which I would like to give. It has to do with the intervention of a man (dead) who, up to this time only worked as far as we knew in the immediate environment of his family circle, a very real personality to me and to his own people. A distressful case had come to my notice of a woman living in a town to which we had, for the moment, no direct access, and it seemed impossible to give any sort of help

at all. I was quite hopeless, and very doubtful of a written message I received to the effect that I should find the deceased man's family able and willing to help, and indicating by the name of another country how this might be achieved. "I will answer for my family. Get help through—(the country)" were his words. It seemed impossible. However, I acted on this advice, and wrote to his family who answered instantly that one of this deceased man's oldest friends was in the country mentioned, and further, that owing to this man's recent travels and position he was able to do what was required. His sympathy and co-operation were enlisted, complete success following a most difficult undertaking.

The pivot on which the whole enterprise swung was the name of the country which pointed unmistakably to the whereabouts of a reliable agent of whose existence I was unaware. One can but surmise a knowledge on the part of the deceased, in his many communications subsequent to his death, of recent events in the other man's career. This is not an isolated exception.

These experiences may raise hope rather than conviction in the minds of others, for knowledge derived from experience cannot be transferred; but in all discoveries, the majority trust to the experiments of those naturally endowed for certain investigations, and judge the outcome of their experiments by the tests of truth and

experience. The hope lies in the fact that in these revelations there are indications of a continuity of purpose shown by the interest in all that made life dear, for this implies a natural law of sequence in an existence determined by the individual aims in past life, and an active remembrance far removed from the time-honoured myth of oblivion.

"THE LANGUAGE OF ANGELS"

I. IN MEDIÆVAL TIMES.

II. FROM THE PSYCHOLOGICAL STANDPOINT.

III. TO-DAY.

“ THE LANGUAGE OF ANGELS ”

I

IN MEDIÆVAL TIMES

IT must be acknowledged that psychic experiences are destructive, in some respects, to old established beliefs. Many orthodox ideas, which have been accepted as articles of faith in childhood's days, and become a matter of habitual thought, are upset by contradictory events. In other respects, there is an increase of faith and understanding in doctrine which has been revealed from time to time for the benefit of mankind. Were I questioned as to what particular points my own faith have been strengthened through personal experience, I should reply, unhesitatingly, the power of thought and the efficacy of prayer. Because of these experiences, I, like many others, have been drawn, irresistibly, to study the records of spiritual revelation, old and new, and find an analogy between certain mystical experiences of all time, and it seems to me that the comparison of contemporary interpretation of these manifestations is valuable.

Although diverse interpretations have been given to supernatural occurrences according to knowledge of their day, there are, beneath the bewildering mass of evidence, underlying truths which are now more perfectly understood. Visions, voices and influences, spiritual or psychic, are common to all ages, but their interpretation and their significance vary, very greatly, with the progress of man's understanding. Spiritual perception appears to be entirely dependent on individual ability, but actual revelation remains unchanged, and the fact that spirit and matter are not considered to be so entirely antagonistic as in mediæval times, for instance, shows that we are coming to a realisation of the old belief in spiritual guidance for the betterment of this world.

The conflict of spirit and matter is perpetual, although in varying forms. Spirit has surmounted, and must still surmount, great difficulties before its importance and supremacy, emphasised two thousand years ago, may be attained. Mentally, morally, and spiritually it is a survival of the fittest in an age when these things are taken into consideration and tested by all that makes for civilisation. If it is felt that modern inquiry is too severe towards psychic revelation, it must be remembered that there has always been a tendency of faith to degenerate into superstition, and abuses have crept in which

have given an impetus to materialism on reasonable grounds. Had the curb of reason been applied to things unseen, progress, although necessarily slow, would have been assured, but in the past, visions, or any means of spiritual intercourse, were regarded by believers as saintly attributes, too holy to be questioned in the light of logic or by practical results.

This revelation was the outcome of a devout life given to prayer and abstinence. It was a sign of divine grace. Doubtless there were the critical spirits of the day who would judge of the quality of this grace by its fruits in the life of the recipient, but, generally, the incidents themselves appear to remain unchallenged by the orthodox. No other interpretation except that of immediate divine influence was accorded to a series of experiences which to-day would be classified as hallucinations in the absence of proof, or explained on the theory of the mysterious workings of a subconscious self.

One may read now the lives of the early saints in the spirit of modern criticism, questioning the interpretation they put upon their experiences, if not their veracity. One may condemn the excesses and extravagances of some of the mystics, but, at the same time, there are certain features in these histories which command our respect—notably their aspirations and marvellous faith in God. The practical outcome of

their meditations shows a nobility of character ; the elevated nature of their inspirational works has obviously a highly spiritual, if not an ultimately divine, source.

Little is known of the higher spiritual side of modern revelation known as psychic. Naturally there is hesitation in acknowledging experiences, wholly private and personal, which, owing to the inadequate testimony of a single individual, may be denounced as delusive, whatever the results may be. Nevertheless, such revelation exists, to be taken into consideration and compared with that of olden times, for it is evident that there are certain similarities. Some truth, undaunted by unbelief or over-credulity, is still persisting in an endeavour to force its way continuously through imperfect human agents.

In mediæval times mysticism reached heights of extravagance which are naturally condemned by modern critics as over-ecstatic, or contemptibly hysterical, but that was only one side of mysticism. In considering the finest products of this period, which, after all, is the rule in any great subject, we find, among these mystics, men and women of strong individuality, who have influenced human thought, not carried away by their exalted experiences, but strengthened in purpose to work for others.

Before the fourteenth century a mystic belonged to the progressive element of his day, and was,

for the most part, in sympathy with reforming ideas. Through the means of voices, impulses and revelations by the Holy Spirit, he received immediate guidance in all he should do. He claimed direct communion with God.

In the lives of some of the great mediæval mystics we find the same characteristics. In their writings, and particularly in those of Saint Catherine of Siena and Saint Theresa of Spain, we find directions as to how this direct communion with the Almighty may be attained; how the divine experience, a sign of spiritual grace, was vouchsafed to men and women of devout character and saintly aspirations. They were divinely taught by a method of communication to which we find frequent allusion in the writings relating to contemporary mysticism—"speech without words after the manner of angels."

Saint Catherine and Saint Theresa may be taken as two of the finest examples of practical idealists that mediæval mysticism produced. The practical outcome of the religious life commands the respect of the most exacting materialists of our day. Those, sceptical of the mystical side of their natures, must acknowledge that the influence of these two women was not only great but beneficent.

Saint Catherine was born in the year 1347, and died at the age of thirty-three, after a life

of strenuous activity. After some years of prayer and abstinence, she entered the world to take up practical work, seemingly on a divine injunction to "banish from her heart all anxious thoughts concerning herself and her own salvation, so that no distraction should keep her back from the service of others." She did not forsake her means of direct guidance, but she evidently regarded the devotional life as a means to an end—preparation for a life of activity in the world, politically and otherwise.

We find records of her in the streets and hospitals of Siena during the terrible plague of 1374, comforting the terror-stricken and dying populace. She was called to the aid of the Church by the Pope to promote reform. Amongst many other works of a practical nature, she is known to have acted as peacemaker between artisans and their employers during a period of revolution. She lived for humanity.

Saint Catherine was a woman of remarkable intellect. She taught herself to read, and, many years later, to write, and we are told by a biographer* that the dignity and beauty of her language have led writers to compare her style, not unfavourably, with that of Dante. Several poems of some merit were written by her, but her book in which her own "philosophy" is set

* Josephine E. Butler.

forth, her letters, many of which are still preserved, and her written prayers afford the chief justification for the high opinion formed of her powers as an author by her contemporaries and by later historians.

Her great successor, Saint Theresa, was equally remarkable, both as a mystic and as a reformer. The Castilian nun exercised an influence over Ferdinand de Toledo, the stern Duke of Alba and the gloomy Philip II. ; she was praised even by Voltaire. She was the means of reforming the whole order of Carmelites. According to one of her recent biographers,* in spite of her visions, voices and experiences in the invisible world " of her own making," Theresa was not by nature a mystic. Her mysticism, at least, was only the accompaniment to the melody of her life. Her greatness, says Mrs. Graham, is in her life—in her boundless activities and in her supreme devotion, not to an Ideal, but to Duty. In a modern encyclopædia we find this following brief description : " Of delicate health, she had a leaning to mysticism, and was subject to supernatural visitations and trances. Yet withal she was of an eminently heroic, saintly, vivacious and wholesome type of womanhood." It is, however, with the idealist side of the lives of these two women that I propose to consider, and especially with

* Mrs. G. C. Graham.

regard to the divine communion which guided their activities, the communion which was an outcome of prayer, a subject of which both Saint Catherine and Saint Theresa were enthusiastic exponents.

Prayer to them was not so much a matter of supplication as a means of grace—a mental exercise in its early stages, through which came a higher sense of spiritual understanding. It was a divine research, an experimental science graduating in stages of three or four degrees, the first three being described as vocal, mental, and a culmination in communion when the still small voice was distinguished by the suppliant. The fourth degree is described by Saint Theresa as an impetus to action :

“ When a soul arrives at this stage she does not remain satisfied with desires ; God gives her the strength to execute them.”

The importance of prayer is advocated by Saint Catherine, and it is evident that she writes in the full knowledge of experience. Whilst indicating to what heights of ecstasy the soul may reach by constant prayer, she differentiates especially between the vocal and mental exercises. She was at times subject to an entranced condition, and was so used as a channel for divine guidance, as the following passage shows. It is taken from

an extant publication of her own revelations, entitled, "A Dialogue—A Colloquy between God and her soul," composed and dictated by her, in trance, in the year 1378.

" . . . Vocal prayer can be useful to the soul and to the pleasure, and from imperfect vocal prayer it can advance by persevering practice to perfect mental prayer. But if it aims simply to complete its number (of paternosters), or if it gave up mental prayer for the sake of vocal, it would never arrive at perfection. Sometimes, when a soul has made a resolution to say a certain number of prayers, I may visit its mind, now in one way, now in another ; at one time with the light of self-knowledge and contrition over its lightness ; at another, with the largesse of My Charity ; at another, by putting before its mind, in diverse manner as it may please Me, and as that soul may have craved the Presence of My Truth. And the soul will be so ignorant that it will turn from My Visitation, in order to complete its number, from a conscientious scruple against giving up what it began. It ought not to do this, for this would be a wile of the devil. But at once, when it feels its mind ready for My Visitation, in any way, as I said, it should abandon the vocal prayer. Then, when the mental has passed, if there is time, it can resume the other

which it had planned to say. But if there is not time it must not care nor be troubled or bewildered."

In a private letter, composed herself in, we may surmise, a normal condition, Saint Catherine carries on this teaching :

"Prayer is of three sorts. The one is perpetual ; it is the holy perpetual desire which prays in the sight of God ; for this desire directs all thy works. . . . The other kind is vocal prayer, when the offices or other prayers are said aloud. This is ordained to reach the third—that is, mental prayer : your soul reaches this when it uses vocal prayer in prudence and humility, so that while the tongue speaks the heart is not far from God. . . . She rises in mental prayer above herself—that is above the gross impulses of the senses—and, with angelic mind, unites herself with God by force of love and sees and knows with the light of thought and clothes herself with truth. She is made the sister of angels."

(From a letter written to her niece Sister Eugenia.)

As a matter of comparison, there is but little difference in Saint Theresa's dissertations on prayer two centuries later.

THE ROYAL ROAD TO HEAVEN 115

“ Although vocal prayer be one thing which is said by the mouth, and mental another, which is accomplished by the intellect and will without the voice, yet if vocal prayer be what it ought, mental is included in it.”

(Ribera.)

It is said that Saint Theresa compared a soul living without mental prayer to one whose body is paralysed—certain souls who are sick, cannot walk although richly gifted by nature and able to converse with God. In the “ Way of Perfection ” we find also that :

“ Prayer was the royal road to heaven in that a great treasure was provided for those who walked in it—the time will come when it will be manifest that what we weigh against so precious a thing is nothing.”

The intuitional faculty is touched on again in this passage taken from the “ Castillo Interior ” :

“ . . . the spirit (in rapture) is taught without the medium of words and understands mysteries which long years—of research could not even have surmised.”

And yet again we find the following sentiment with regard to the same intuitive sense :

"There is a kind of supernatural tuition, she tells us, in which the Lord suddenly places in the centre of the soul, what He wishes it to understand, without words or representations of any kind."

Saint Theresa is confident that this most inexplicable species of communication was beyond the reach of any delusion, and inaccessible to the father of lies.

In the seventeenth century mysticism is not experienced exclusively by members of the Church of Rome. Amongst others, George Fox was then preaching the doctrine of direct, divine revelation, the religion of individual conviction and experience, Robert Barclay, the Scottish Quaker, was expounding the subject of spiritual influence, Swedenborg explaining the interior teaching of the divine Word:

"I recount the things that I have seen," says Emmanuel Swedenborg. "I take my stand upon experience. I have proceeded by observation and induction as strict as that of any man of science among you. Only it has been given me to enjoy an experience reaching into the two worlds—that of spirit, as well as that of matter."

In a chapter entitled "Concerning Worship"

it is interesting to read the conclusions of Robert Barclay and to compare his experiences of silent meditation with those of Saint Catherine and Saint Theresa.

“ Yea, though there be not a word spoken, yet is the true spiritual worship performed . . . divers meetings have passed without one word ; and yet our souls have been greatly edified and refreshed, and our hearts wonderfully overcome with the secret sense of God’s power and Spirit, which without words have been ministered from one vessel to another. This is indeed strange and incredible to the mere natural and carnally minded man, who will be apt to judge all time lost where there is not something spoken that is obvious to the outward senses ; and therefore I shall insist a little upon this subject as one that can speak from a certain experience, and not by mere hearsay, of this wonderful and glorious dispensation, which hath so much the more of the wisdom and glory of God in it as this silent waiting upon God is contrary to the nature of man’s spirit, will and wisdom. . . . No words, yea, not the best and purest words, even the words of scripture are able to satisfy. . . . Such are necessitated *to be silent* before the Lord being directed to that inward principle *of life and light in themselves.*”

(Barclay’s “ Apology,” Prop. XI.)

But it is to Madame Guyon we owe the relation of experiences which anticipated the very factor which was to instil hope in the hearts of serious investigators towards the end of the nineteenth century.

It is natural that we should find the same appreciation of the experience of wordless communion in the autobiography of Madame Guyon, as in the writings of her two great predecessors, Saint Catherine and Saint Theresa, advocates of her own original faith, the Roman Catholic Church. Doubtless, she took them as examples in the early days and acted on their injunctions to pray with the full expectation of the state to which vocal prayer would lead. Like them, she regarded the wordless communion as divine, but whilst upholding the means of this communion also as a divine faculty, to her, it was not exclusively so. In her experience, such communion is possible between human beings under certain conditions, the conditions depending on the state of the human soul and often the dual concentration of a mutual prayer.

There are, according to Vaughan, records of similar experiences in the life of another mystic, Saint Ida of Nivelles. "It was revealed to her in a moment of ecstasy that a friend was in the same condition; the friend was made aware, simultaneously, that Saint Ida was immersed in the same divine light with herself. They were

as one soul in the Lord, and the Virgin Mary appeared to make a third in the saintly communion. On another occasion, when at a distance from a priest to whom she was much attached, both were entranced at the same time—when rapt to heaven, he beheld her in the presence of Christ, at Whose command she communicated to him, by a spiritual kiss, a portion of the grace with which she had been so richly endowed."

"I understood," writes Madame Guyon, "that God wished to teach me that the language of angels might be learnt by men on earth—that is converse without words."

She was gradually reduced to this wordless communication alone in her interviews with Father La Combe; they appear to have understood one another in "a manner ineffable and divine." The use of speech, or of the pen, was regarded by Madame Guyon as a kind of accommodation, on her part, to the weakness of souls not sufficiently advanced for these internal communications.

There was another development of this human communion which may be described as "feeling at a distance" between her and others united to her by a spiritual tie of mutual prayer. She believed that many persons for whom she was interceding with great fervour, were sensible at

the time of an extraordinarily gracious influence and that her spirit communicated mysteriously "in the Lord" with the spirits of those dear to her when far away.

"There was a discharge on her best disposed children to their mutual joy and comfort, and not only when present, but sometimes when absent. I even felt it to flow from me into their souls. When they wrote to me, they informed me that at such times they had received abundant infusions of divine grace."

This feeling, experienced by Madame Guyon, was not always, however, that of mutual joy and comfort, for we read that in Paris she no longer "imagines" (to quote a biographer, R. A. Vaughan), that she suffers inward anguish consequent on the particular religious condition of Father La Combe when he is three hundred miles off. But, in her autobiography, she still speaks of the sense which enabled her to know the state of the souls given to her, even when they were at a distance; and of communication in God with those to whom the Lord united her by the tie of spiritual maternity.

There is one other side of Madame Guyon's character, which should not be ignored in comparing her with the saints of earlier days, and that is the practical life with which mystic

revelation did not interfere. Although the mystical side is due partly to her own "imagination," as Vaughan implies, he does not hesitate to praise the practical service which was also a feature in the lives of Saint Catherine and Saint Theresa. "Few lives," he says, "have been more busy than that of Madame Guyon with the activities of an indefatigable benevolence."

The feeling at a distance, however, is in the present day given a more explicit reason than imagination; the same experience received the honour of a new and special word in the English language, coined expressly to define a faculty which, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, could no longer be ignored as illusory nor honoured as exclusively divine. Madame Guyon anticipated material for investigation which has forced some great thinkers to believe in the existence of spirit independently of matter; at the same time, giving cause for extreme faith to others in the unlimited powers of the human mind, to the exclusion of any other solution. In telepathy, the investigators of psychical research seem to have struck the deepest note of an ascending scale of vibrations to which the mystics of old responded octaves higher than modern minds can measure.

II

FROM THE PSYCHOLOGICAL STANDPOINT

THE nineteenth century was not remarkable for mystical revelations. It followed a period of materialism, the natural reaction from the extremes to which mysticism, uncurbed by reason, had reached. But the pendulum was slowly swinging back again, and there was a desire in the hearts of men—perhaps seldom expressed—for proof of a universal hope that existence was not dependent on the physical body, nor life altogether ruled by the physical forces. It was, generally speaking, an age of agnosticism conventionally repressed. Science was avoided by the orthodox, because scientific speculation led to doubt and doubt led to hell, and in that respect the attitude towards religious beliefs had not changed since mediæval days. Religion, like the experiences of mystics, was too holy to be questioned, although mediæval mysticism or similar manifestations of unseen forces were regarded with suspicion.

Towards the end of this century there was a development in research which called forth denunciation or derision from onlookers who were content to remain accordingly in faith or agnosticism from prejudice or indifference as the case might be. Agnosticism, in some cases, was

beginning to adopt an active form of inquiry into matters which might possibly give some explanation of the influences of an unseen world. A few thinkers were unable to accept the fact of traditional divine revelation; faith in the Resurrection was lacking in the apparent absence of a continuance of proof. The past examples of recorded revelation which had been powerful enough to instil in the minds of the recipients a belief in the unseen and a hope of everlasting life, could no longer be conscientiously ignored. Nor could such experiences remain sheltered beneath an atmosphere of holiness which had, in the past, precluded any sort of criticism or inquiry from mankind generally.

Popular opinion deprecated the investigation of things unknowable; or, at least, it was considered a pity that men's minds should waste their energies on things of no material value. But visions, voices, and influences aroused the interest of eminent psychologists, and their conclusions, after some years of investigations on scientific grounds, are, for the most part, a strong argument in favour of the chief doctrines of religious teaching with regard to prayer, revelation and inspiration.

Of course, these experiences were not treated from the religious point of view. Professor William James, of Harvard University, is a case in point. In his book, "The Varieties of

Religious Experiences," he has no scruples whatsoever in sobering down manifestations, spiritual or psychic, and pruning away much that had been regarded as infallible. He criticises trances, voices, visions, and peculiarities, classed as pathological, not from the theologian's, nor even the anthropologist's point of view, but merely as a psychologist, acknowledging them as features which have helped to give religion, necessary to humanity, authority and influence. And he takes the more developed subjective phenomena recorded in past literature, which were produced by articulate and fully conscious men, together with other of his own day, comparing and judging of their value by immediate luminousness, philosophic reasonableness and moral helpfulness as the only available criteria.

Professor James is of opinion that personal religion is a gift of our organism. It is either there or not there for us, and there are persons who can no more become possessed by it than they can fall in love with a certain individual by word of command. He differentiates between religion and science as the interest of the individual in his private and personal destiny and the repudiation of the personal point of view, respectively. But religion is taken as the most important of all human functions, and, in the belief that founders of every Church, and all the originators of Christian sects own their power, originally,

to the fact of their personal communion with the divine, supernatural experiences are seriously considered.

This divine communion, the religious feeling of the presence of God, is obviously not always a matter of hallucination as many assert, but, in certain cases, it is certified that this experience does not give conviction of a divine visitation. With regard to some experiences of a friend, it is said that this friend does not interpret these experiences theistically as signifying the presence of God. There is a consciousness of something there—a knowledge of the close presence of a sort of mighty person; and when the experience was over, memory alone persisted as the sole proof of reality.

An interesting record of the same sort of experience is given, but with the accompanying sense of the presence of God.

“I have, on a number of occasions, felt that I had enjoyed a period of intimate communion with the divine. . . . What I felt was a temporary loss of my own identity, accompanied by an illumination which revealed to me a deeper significance than I had been wont to attach to life. It is in this that I find my justification for saying that I have enjoyed communication with God.”

There is another instance quoted from the correspondence of James Russell Lowell.

"I had a revelation last Friday evening. Mr. Pitman entered into an argument with me on spiritual matters. . . . I never before so clearly felt the Spirit of God in me and around me. The air seemed to waver to and fro with the presence of Something I knew not what."

These examples, cited from a number, show that the sense of divine communion did not cease with the early mystics. Men of to-day have similar experiences and, moreover, these experiences claim the attention of modern students. But, while Professor James, in a truly modern spirit, views the whole subject of mysticism critically, his investigations impel a reverent attitude towards spiritual manifestations. His conclusions are extraordinarily favourable, considering an obvious dislike of the supernatural state for its own sake. He gives Saint Theresa, for instance, full appreciation for all her good qualities but, at the same time, criticises her as one who wasted too much of her energies in experiences which could have no direct bearing on her earthly life.

She was, he says, one of the ablest women, in many respects, of whose life we have records. She had a powerful intellect of the practical order.

She wrote admirable descriptive psychology, possessed a will equal to any emergency, great talent for politics and business, a buoyant disposition and a first-rate literary style. She was tenaciously aspiring, and put her whole life at the service of her religious ideals. Yet, so paltry were these, according to our present way of thinking, that (although I know that others have been moved differently) "I confess," says the Professor, "that my only feeling in reading her has been pity that so much vitality of soul should have found such poor employment."

One can hardly consider Professor James narrow-minded or unappreciative of spiritual revelation when reading his opinion of George Fox, the "psychopath" of the Quaker religion which he founded—"a religion which is impossible to over-praise, rooted in spiritual inwardness and more like the original Gospel truth than men had ever known in England."

This enlargement of perception, defined as mysticism, cannot be imparted or transferred to others. It is a direct experience which would probably fail to attract the attention of the world, were it not for the profound and lasting influence it has on the mystic himself. There appear to be two direct courses—along the downward ladder to insanity, or the upward ladder to an extra-consciousness, which emphasises the need for service in a suffering world.

To the mystic eternity is now ; eternity is timeless.

The mystic's world is more extensive, his point of view superior and commanding a wider radius than that of the physical senses. Those who stand outside of these states may not accept their revelations uncritically but, it is agreed, the higher mystical states point in directions to which the religious sentiments of non-mystical men incline. Hypotheses of spirituality are offered which Professor James declares, as thinkers, he and others cannot possibly upset. And further, when the intuitive knowledge, which in most persons remains subliminal, appears to impel energy along the lines of the inspiration received, we have realities to judge by the test of experience. A practical outcome of spiritual revelation is the sign of true inspiration ; the results manifested in the actions are the fruits to be seen by the world who rightly demands concrete conclusions.

On the whole, prayer is treated more leniently by this writer on Religious Experiences. It is given full value as the very soul and essence of religion when taken in its fullest sense, meaning every kind of inward communion as taught by the saints and not limited to mere begging. Petitional prayer is only one department ; its effect, the sign that religion is not rooted in delusion. There is some spiritual energy which,

through prayer, becomes active and spiritual work is really effected, but, while recording numbers of examples where petitionary prayer and those especially for guidance and help have evoked response, Professor James is inclined to leave the explanation of the workings of such laws to Frederick Myers. The following quotation is from a private letter written by Mr. Myers to a friend, and shows a theory independent of usual doctrine.

“ I am glad that you have asked me about prayer because I have rather strong ideas on the subject. There exists around us a spiritual universe, and that universe is in actual relation with the material. . . . The prayer is not indeed a purely subjective thing ; it means a real increase in intensity of absorption of spiritual power of grace ; but we do not know enough of what takes place in the spiritual world, to know how prayer operates ; who is cognisant of it, or through what channel the grace is given . . . it would be rash to say that Christ Himself hears us ; while to say that God hears us is merely to restate the first principle—that grace flows in from the infinite spiritual world.”

The extensive action of individual prayer showing a function through which man may

exercise his own desires and affect the object to which these prayers are directed, is a very modern idea, far removed from the exclusively divine operation as conceived by the saints. Taken in comparison with scriptural teaching, it seems but a more comprehensive view of original Christian teaching that thought itself was as important as action. Further investigations into this functioning on the mental plane strengthen, if not prove, the words of the Apostle that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous (or wise) man availeth much. Understand the laws that govern thought and prayer, in its widest sense, must necessarily become a scientific truth, invigorated with fresh vitality. Investigation into holy ground has, so far, but strengthened the position of religious teaching.

The conclusions which Professor James draws from the experiences under his consideration are strikingly in accordance with those of persons to whom faith is the only method of deduction. It is, principally, that religion must necessarily play an eternal part in human history, and that, although unable to accept either popular or scholastic theism, he believes that, in communion with the Ideal, new force comes into the world. The unseen region cannot be merely ideal, for it produces effects; and it is the effects—the total expression of human experience as he viewed it—that have urged a critical psychologist beyond

the narrow scientific bounds, and called forth the remark, "Who knows whether the faithfulness of individuals here to their poor over-beliefs may not actually help God in turn to be more effectively faithful to His own greater tasks?"

Automatisms, unaccountable impulses to act in the direction of automatic speech or writing, are recorded in most religious lives. To quote Professor James once more, he speaks of the leaders of thought being accustomed to other forms of automatism. Saint Paul, he says, had his visions, his ecstasies, his gift of tongues. The whole array of Christian saints and hierarchs, including the greatest, the Bernards, Loyolas, Luthers, Foxes, Wesleys, had their visions, voices, rapt conditions, guiding impressions and openings (to-day known as impressions). They have, through their results, gained due respect, and are undoubtedly a superior development of a sense which, like Madame Guyon, the investigators of psychical research discovered could be a purely human influence.

"I understood," wrote Madame Guyon, "that God wished to teach me that the language of angels might be learnt by men on earth—that is converse without words."

"The title of this book," writes Frederick Myers two hundred years later in his introduction to "Phantasms of the Living," "embraces all

transmissions of thought and feeling from one person to another by other means than through the recognised channels of sense."

There is no question of religion in the two formidable volumes which contain the conclusions of Myers, Gurney, Podmore, Barrett, Richet, and others, on the subject which lies in the "region of ethical and æsthetic emotion." The transmission of thought and feeling is no longer alluded to as the language of angels. It is a means of communication which Myers considered a "possible scientific basis for much to which men now cling without definite justification," and, as such, the treatment of direct action of mind upon mind was believed to be necessary by him and his colleagues before considering other supernormal or supernatural phenomena.

Thought transference exists between people in a normal state, and, according to M. Richet, the percipients need not be persons of any special susceptibility. Experiments of elementary sensations prove that tastes, smells and pains can be felt by the percipient—a word can be reproduced sometimes unconsciously. Besides the emotional impressions, telepathy can be auditory, tactile and visual. Apparitions have been traced to the discarnate, hence the title of the book in question.

These mental representations of the living occurring, as they do sometimes, when the

person in question is in a normal condition and not at the point of death, are the most interesting branch of psychic investigation which has been brought to the notice of students. They open up so many avenues of inquiry. The old belief that such apparitions were only those of the dead—ghosts—has been confounded by the many examples of living people who have been seen clairvoyantly. Apparently they appeared to their friends when their thoughts were concentrated on them—thought creating vibrations which arranged themselves in the likeness of the agent.

Why these manifestations should occur between certain individuals is still a mystery. Telepathy is not confined to friends or even to sympathetic acquaintances; the necessary rapport appears to exist between strangers; a stranger to the agent at a distance may be clearly perceptive of these vibrations, while a friend or relative present may not. One may conclude that definite knowledge of the laws governing this soul sympathy is but a matter of time. Madame Guyon was more prophetic than she knew when she said that the language of angels might be learnt by men on earth. The theories of Frederick Myers may prove to have an equally prophetic value if investigation is carried on with the same painstaking manner in the present century.

Before leaving the subject as it stood when "Phantasms of the Living" was published, I will quote his theory on thought with regard to materialism from the same book :

"I maintain that if the general fact of telepathic communication between mind and mind be admitted, it must also be admitted that an element is thus introduced into our conception of the aggregate of empirically known facts which constitutes a serious obstacle to the materialistic synthesis of human experience. The psychical element . . . in man must henceforth almost inevitably be conceived as having relations which cannot be expressed in terms of matter.

"This dogma—new to experimental science—is . . . familiar and central in all the higher forms of religion. Relations inexpressible in terms of matter and subsisting between spirit and Spirit—the human and Divine—are implied in the very notion of the interchange of sacred love and Love, of grace and worship.

"The materialist may regard prayer and aspiration with indulgence, or even with approval, but he must necessarily conceive them as forming merely the psychical side of certain molecular movements of the particles of human organisms, and he must necessarily regard the notion of Divine response to prayer

as an illusion generated by subsequent molecular movements of the same organisms—the mere recoil and reflex of the wave which the worshipper himself has created.”

The position taken by Frederick Myers with regard to telepathy at this time was not common. There was a good deal of contention on the subject, and much incredulity. Certain thinkers looked upon language as an unsatisfactory means of communicating thought, and others regarded the more subtle form of thought transference as a mere evolutionary stage in man's mental capacities, but, generally, any facts relating to this faculty were looked upon as imaginary or coincidental.

It is most interesting to find in current literature of 1920 the importance now attached to telepathy. It is practically unquestioned. “No candid student of human nature,” writes a dignitary of the Church, “now denies or disputes the influence of mind upon mind as in telepathy, nor mind upon body as in Christian Science. Nobody will now venture to assert that spiritual communication is not as possible as wireless telegraphy between the living.”* From all sides, the importance of telepathy is recognised. Understood as a human faculty, it is used as a

* The Right Rev. T. E. C. Welldon, Dean of Durham.

weapon against any belief in Divine intervention, guidance or spiritual influences ; on this human, though not actually physical, basis, there lies a hope that it may explain the laws of spiritual communication, and that inspiration, efficacious prayer, influx, and moral strength will be completely understood.

In one sense this is a step back into mediæval mysticism. Such communication has a spiritual source. Not exclusively spiritual, says the man of to-day, with instances of popular examples of telepathy in his mind and taking the word spiritual as being divinely so. For, it is now proved that thought is not necessarily prayer—the action of transferential thought a human possibility not confined to the righteous—and this means of communication, in the light of trivial and sometimes absurd incidents, is not used solely for philosophic or religious propaganda. Therefore, telepathy is still felt to be more or less something, if not physical, at any rate in some mysterious way pertaining to matter, and when it comes to an extended telepathy, to some people anathema, touching, as it does, on the souls or thoughts of the departed, we are on holy ground. The dead, despite evidence all around us of evolution and continuity, are in God's hands, in a place indescribable and utterly detached from this world by a door which God has shut. An impenetrable space lies between

human beings and the discarnate spirits of men and women whose mutual thoughts might logically be supposed to bridge the gulf unimpeded by matter. They may, say some, but if they do, it is a saintly communion, holy and sacred. It must be regarded as a matter of religion, accepted in faith, unquestioned by science. Extended telepathy holds exactly the same position now as human telepathy did in the time of Madame Guyon—a saintly attribute, a spiritual communion between “those in the Lord.”

The language of angels is now understood by men on earth, but any manifestation of an angel * (or “*messenger*,” to give the correct translation) no longer in a physical body, is piously distinguished as a communion of saints. The same order of revelation, the identical results of thought vibrations which have been found active in human beings, is too holy, even now, to be questioned. And, in the absence of proof, certain sections of the public distinguish between the two as communication and communion, respectively, and preach faith in the communion of saints, which to many is merely a familiar passage of emotional obscurity, owing to the fact that it is little understood and seldom explained.

* I use the word “angel” here in the sense that it is obviously intended in the phrase: “It is his angel” (Acts xii. 15).

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To some, however, it has a definite meaning through experience.

An authentic story, related to me by a distinguished medical man, shows a conception of saintly communion beautiful in its simplicity. The question of the right interpretation of the Communion of Saints was raised at a Bible class, and several young soldiers were asked to say what they thought it meant. There was only one who answered. To illustrate his meaning he related an experience which had occurred in France, where he had recently seen some heavy fighting. His best friend had been killed, and soon after, this soldier lost his way; he was in a tight corner and could not find a way out. All hope of a safe return was fast leaving him, when he received guidance which proved to be effectual. He supposed that he had a "vision"; anyhow, it was the figure of his dead friend who led him to safety, and just before the vision faded he pointed to a kneeling form close by, whom the boy recognised as his mother. She was safe at home; he knew and he felt, instinctively, that she was praying for him. It was all over before he realised that something out of the ordinary had happened, but the impression remained strong and convincing. And his escape from being taken prisoner or from probable death was a reality. "That, sir, I take it, is the meaning of the Communion of Saints!"

There is little doubt that the boy's mother would hesitate to call herself a saint. “ The saintly character,” says Professor James, “ is the character for which spiritual emotions are the habitual centre of the personal energy.” Men of pre-eminent saintliness have, according to Dean Inge, an unshakable conviction, not based on inference but on immediate experience, that God is a spirit with whom the human spirit can hold intercourse. The woman in faith used the old mystics' method of divine communion, invoking God's aid to keep her son safe. And if we are to take the story as evidence—it is no isolated case—and not a hallucination of the brain caused by the nervous tension of a prolonged position of extreme danger, it would appear that mysticism is justified of her faith in the efficacy of prayer and divine revelation. There is also the fact that telepathy between human beings is as strongly evinced in this case. The combination of the two is a formidable argument in favour of the belief that God works in man but not instead of man—not even discarnate man. If the third factor—the communion between the incarnate and discarnate spirits of men—is in line with telepathic experiment, we are within our rights to regard the investigation of God's laws in this region as legitimate, although holy ground.

III

TO-DAY

It is easy to see that mediæval thought still influences that of to-day on certain points in modern investigation. The scientific hypothesis that there is a natural *rappor*t between the sympathetic souls which bridges distance is not uncommon; the theory that thought is perceptible is second nature to some reasoning minds. Many will allow that there is truth in the belief of "supernatural" guidance through the agency of a recently discarnate spirit. But there is an idea, popular and undenominational, that any communion between the dead and the living must necessarily be religious, that is to say, it should occur during a time of prayer, at a sacred service, or, to use a current expression, "in the Lord." It should be of a highly spiritual nature, too lofty to be the means of guidance in trivial details of daily life. In short, the mediæval attitude to the "language of angels" has a parallel in a "communion of saints," and this communion must be regarded as holy and allowed to rest in obscurity, unquestioned by the logical faculty.

The first few years of this century have seen discoveries that few men could have foretold. Even now, in its infancy, changes have been

wrought that would have staggered our immediate ancestors. Cosmic law has been superseded through fresh knowledge of a still higher law ; realities, conceived as dreams, have been brought forth as mighty forces. There is another dimension of existence. The subconscious self is practically acknowledged as a psychological certainty in a field of unquestioned activity. This field lies in a fourth dimension of space, which science looks forward to locate in the future with some degree of accuracy. Ideals are being gradually brought down to what is, metaphorically speaking, a rule of three. Old spiritual truths are known now to be purely mental attributes ; evolution, men take it, is the keynote of life on this planet—evolution of the Ego is not an unknown doctrine. But for all this, there is influence in the minds of many human beings which can be traced to mediæval thought, a lingering idea that in the transition of souls from what we call life, to the state commonly known as death, the personality leaps into absolute perfection—in other words he, despite his earthly propensities, becomes a saint.

It is illogical, but then we have, so it is said, arrived at an *impasse*. The after-death state cannot be investigated ; even if there be this possibility, it should remain a matter of faith. Any feeling of personal communion must not be encouraged beyond circumscribed limits ;

obscurity or semi-illumination is preferable to the full light of clear revelation. It must be taken for granted that a discarnate spirit is instantly occupied with saintly aspirations far removed from any natural interest in the difficulties or miseries of those he loved still on earth. One has only to read the daily newspapers, to see these sentiments expressed by people of all classes.

Of course, saintliness itself has seen many changes, or rather, man's conception of its meaning has varied through the ages. Once filthy rags were positively part of the religious life; indifference to uncleanness and to unspeakable discomforts, the sign of spiritual growth. But now, cleanliness is next to godliness; extreme ascetic discipline but seldom exercised. We obey an older precept than that followed by the early saints in a practical belief that the human body should be honoured as a temple of the living God, made fit for service and not racked with unnecessary pain and torture to eliminate the danger of a future hell-fire. So it is possible that the term saint conveys nothing more to some people than an ordinary human being whose main desire is beneficence towards others in things temporal. This conception of the word simplifies the meaning of certain incidents which have, so far as we may see, no direct bearing upon the things eternal.

The private and personal phenomena of mediæval mystics from a divine source is replaced by a private and personal revelation in modern psychics from a lower source—that of discarnate individuals. This is the keynote of the mysticism of to-day. It is more human ; it has more direct bearing on the needs of common humanity. At the same time, the modern and personal side called psychic revelation is a good step lower than the aspirations of the mystics whose sole aim was communion with God. It need not necessarily be inferior as regards motive, but it is as well to recognize that the desire to attain communion with a discarnate spirit of our own order is not divine aspiration. It affects human life in a way that we can understand, and there is nothing obscure in the guidance obtained from one who was in the habit of guiding during his or her life. The means of communication are similar to the communion of the mystics, but for all that it is well to make the distinction quite clear and keep to the comparison of the means rather than to that of the end—to leave the higher spiritual side, which so often evades expression, to experiences which, even if unverifiable, may eliminate harsh judgment on the grounds of mental derangement by the lasting impression on the mind or life of the recipient with sound results.

The feeling of presence, recognition of a

familiar sense of the proximity of a known personality, is usual amongst psychics. It occurs in common with the living and can be traced to the individual thoughts of the one recognised. This experience has an analogy with regard to the dead—the feeling is the same. It is equally impressive, more so in fact on certain occasions, but it can be as impersonal as in olden times.

~ Prayer for guidance is often answered by an immediate and definite inspiration concerning a difficult matter, quite new to the supplicant, and proved subsequently to be a wise solution, but unaccompanied by any sense of personality. How often one hears a person say, "I got up from my knees with my path laid clearly before me," and the most astute sceptic cannot deny the wisdom of the inspiration sometimes, whether the prayer is answered by the subconscious mind of the supplicant or by angelic guidance. "I had a sudden inspiration," says another, "which decided, as I now see, a momentous event which was then unforeseen." Prayer is as potent now as in the days when advocated by the mystics with a whole-hearted faith in the workings of Providence.

I asked a friend who has worked for many years in some of the worst slums in London if the very poor—the submerged tenth—had any religious instincts at all. Her reply was that, even amongst the lowest classes, she found a

belief in prayer which was often the one redeeming point ; that when there was hardly the capacity for understanding what religion actually meant, there was an inborn instinct to pray. Naturally I asked for an instance, and she gave me the following from amongst her own experiences, with regard to two sisters she had come across recently in the workhouse. One was delicate and had been always incapable of work ; the other had worked for both and had kept body and soul together for at least fifty-five years by what is known as umbrella trimming—sewing the tassels on umbrellas, a task which is not too well paid. My friend said it was incredible that they could have existed for so long under such conditions. She knew the particulars of how the poor live ; to her it was a miracle. But the conditions, bad as they had been, were eminently preferable to pauperism to these two women ; the workhouse was looked upon as degradation.

“ How did you do it all those years ? ” asked my friend.

“ Well, miss,” said the woman, “ I don’t mind telling *you*. I prayed for work ; and when I worked, every time I sewed a tassel on an umbrella, I prayed to do it well, and everything went right until now. But I am praying and I mean to go on praying.” She only asks a sufficiency of work to ensure a pittance which would keep her and her sister out of the workhouse in

the dignity of independence ; in face of old age and undermined health, she is praying with a faith based on experience of old.

To a psychic, the importance of prayer is proved almost daily. Laying aside the numerous cases of sudden inspirations that certain individuals are in difficulties or the unaccountable impulse to give some practical help in a quarter where to judge by outward appearances it is not necessary—laying these aside as examples of purely telepathic significance, there is a preponderance of definite instructions of the requirements of certain individuals given by discarnate spirits. When it is possible to act on these instructions, diplomatically, for it is seldom that one may give the true reason for practical interest, invariably the remark is made—"All this has come as an answer to prayer." And it is an answer to prayer, and one which I believe is the key to most adequate responses in practical matters, although there are many who are guided unconsciously in response to their natural inclination to alleviate the sufferings of others.

Psychic work does not consist only of receiving messages from the dead to the living to assure them of their welfare. I think, almost without exception, the mere experience of psychic revelation gives the recipient a sense of responsibility, and a realisation of the need for service and especially in practical aid to those who need it.

The psychic faculty itself, and especially telepathic perception, gives a full knowledge of hidden anxieties although the actual details remain unknown. It guides one, naturally, to see what is necessary for permanent help. I do not allude here to mere charity, but to the means through which the individual in question may find the opportunity he seeks to secure a market value for his resources. It goes no further, often, than common sense ; an outsider's point of view, valuable because detached ; but communications will be given in many cases in which is indicated the very person amongst one's acquaintances who will prove to be the important stepping-stone to success. The interpenetration of the two worlds, in my own experience, deals mostly with practical philanthropy.

There is the other side. The psychic is helped in service by mysterious means. Probably there has been no idea of praying for certain objects, but the desire, itself, often seems to evoke a spontaneous and practical help from quite unexpected sources. In a personal matter, where reserve was absolutely necessary until a certain point in the proceedings was reached, I discovered that the friend to whom I went for advice had been mysteriously aware all the time of the difficulties which were in the path and obeyed a strong impulse to arrange her plans accordingly. I say, mysteriously, because she is unable to give

any articulate reason for this sense of certainty which influenced her so strongly. The point is that when I laid the case before her, everything was in readiness and the object was achieved immediately without an inevitable delay which would have occurred had she not acted previously in conjunction with personal inspiration. She cannot explain it, but, had she been a little more psychic, there is no doubt the source of the inspiration might have been apparent. To me, it has always been one of the strongest proofs of supernatural intervention I have ever known, but then it is a matter of personal experience, the only true way of arriving at absolute conviction.

The comforting and helpful vibrations of intercessory prayer are keenly felt and recognised by a psychic. There is a great difference in the effect on the recipient ; one can sense immediately the feeling that is conveyed by a stray thought, and the warmth and power of which one is conscious of a prayer to God for spiritual strength. A thought attracts one's attention towards an image of the individual through whose agency the vibrations are raised ; a prayer gives a sense of harmony and spiritual strength that language fails to express.

As a matter of personal experience, a change in my handwriting if I happen to be writing at the time gives an immediate clue to the personality with whom I am momentarily *en rapport*.

The pen twists into characteristic strokes and turns, foreign to me but more or less like the individual who is found, invariably, to be thinking of me at the moment if not in actual correspondence. Once I believed this to occur only when a letter was on its way to me, but it appears, casual thoughts will have the same effect, and I am endeavouring to get instances of this form of telepathy, characteristic handwriting, properly attested however trivial the incident, because of the possibility that it may lead to more important developments.

One has little to show in an incident of mere thought except its effect on the handwriting. In the middle of a letter recently my handwriting changed so deliberately to that of a friend (one with whom I am in natural *rapprochement*) that I was astonished to receive a visit from her the same afternoon instead of the expected letter. On comparing the exact time, I ascertained that at the moment my handwriting changed, she was discussing a business matter with an agent in which we had a joint interest. As there were some unforeseen expenses, she, in entering more fully into details, was turning over in her mind, at the same time, the possibility that I might question the wisdom of making a hard and fast decision and called later to discuss the matter. Incidentally, the slight anxiety was conveyed to me when my writing changed.

It would be, of course, comparatively easy to guess, even unconsciously, the arrival of letters from regular correspondents and to place such divination amongst telepathic experiences. I have found, however, the same thing happen, a change of handwriting in the midst of literary work accompanied by the peculiar sense of personality, in cases where the acquaintanceship has been slight, and a letter a new departure. In an age when writing is so very general, it is possible that handwriting may be a development in telepathy to reckon with on the theory that characteristic handwriting is decided by the personal manipulation of thought vibrations which possibly convey a personal sense of feeling recognisable to a psychic.

As an example of this feeling combined with a change in handwriting I can give one instance which is attested by two disinterested outsiders. I was jotting down notes for some research work, and in the middle of my notes the handwriting changed, becoming larger and the strokes more decided. It was unfamiliar, but there was a sense of personality which I recognised as a new acquaintance, and I instantly felt that he was writing a letter to me. I mentioned the fact to two friends, one an old member of the psychical research whom I met later on in the day, as interesting if it proved to be correct, for there was no reason to expect a letter from this quarter,

We calculated the time in transit and concluded that, in the event of a letter being written at the time I stated, it should arrive, if posted at once, by the early delivery in the morning. I received it safely at eight o'clock the next day, the date and postmark coinciding with my experience.

I could give several instances of the immediate effect that prayer has had upon my psychic understanding, but there again one has to discount a great deal because, in so many cases, it was what might be expected from friends, and it is an exception when people exercise much spiritual energy on mere acquaintances these days. But, I have an exception which I am allowed to relate, to prove the rule.

Two years ago when staying in the country with my sister I was supremely conscious of what Madame Guyon would call grace which flowed to me from the soul of one whom I felt was, a Mrs. K., a very, very slight acquaintance. It occurred for several mornings between the hours of eight and nine, and over and above this consciousness was a strong smell of incense in the room.

I remarked to my sister that it could hardly be possible that so slight an acquaintanceship as that of Mrs. K. could justify my feeling that she was interceding for me before God, and it was some time before I could bring myself to ask her if it was really a fact. I did not meet her again

for nearly a year and we subsequently became friends.

As far as I am aware, Mrs. K. did not pray for me again until some time later. I was then conscious of the "grace" and personality, and the incense was again a feature in the experience, but, this time, I felt that she had a strong purpose for including me in her prayers and felt intensely curious to know the reason. There was a sense of impending trouble which I could not locate.

The same afternoon I received news of the sudden death of a great friend which was indeed a shock and a very great loss to me in many ways. Mrs. K. had heard of it the previous day and, knowing how it would affect me, made me the special subject of her prayers that morning at early Mass; but this I did not verify as coincidental with my experience until I met her a week later.

The following letter gives her explanation.

" London,
" 10th March, 1920.

" My dear Miss Monteith,

" Many thanks for your letter of the 7th which gave me great pleasure, as I had been thinking of you and wondering where you were.

" Certainly you may use anything I have told you about our experiences of reciprocal

prayer—and intention. Three occasions when I have prayed for ‘your intention’ as we Catholics express it—stand out vividly in my mind. On the first occasion, my prayer did *not* reach you in this world, so far as we know—but no prayer ever goes astray. On the two other occasions, when I specially mentioned you for a specific reason, you became aware of it, and asked me if it were not so.

“The first time—which did not impress you—was in June, 1917, I *think*; I found you alone one afternoon, and we had a long talk on telepathy, the influence of prayer, etc. I insisted rather strongly on the Catholic Church’s authority and wisdom, and walking home I wondered if my zeal had not outrun my politeness! But I felt so strongly attracted to you, and I so wished you to be one of us. You were also rather anxious about —— at the time; so that night I prayed earnestly for you, and again at Mass next morning, that she might recover quickly and that you might some day be one with us. That time I made no impression on you.

“The second time was after reading your first article in the *Nineteenth Century*. It was in May—the ‘Month of Mary’—and I felt more than ever that you were what I should call a mystic—though not developed on Catholic lines—and thus, I felt, missing much of the joy

and glory of your gift—and I prayed for Light on you, both at night and at Mass on the following day. You were away from home, and it was some time after that we again had a talk on these subjects—and you then asked me, much to my surprise, if I had not prayed for you at that time—I think I told you then, that as your name was Mary—it was ‘Mary’s month’—*i.e.* *May*—I had specially recommended you to the Protection of Our Blessed Lady.

“The third time was in 1919, and is quite fresh in my mind. I travelled to Exeter with Mrs. W., a mutual friend—and she told me she feared you would be very sad at the death, just announced, of ——. My impression is that I had also seen it in the *Telegraph* before starting.

“I felt *very* sorry for you—both for having lost a friend whom I knew you valued, and also as I feared your work would be disturbed. You were much in my thoughts both that day and the next—and I prayed for you that evening and at Mass in the morning—I prayed that you might be comforted, and that your work should not suffer—and especially that you might have the grace given you to be one with us in the Holy Catholic Church.

“It was not till the afternoon of Saturday that you heard the news. I was not very

surprised when you asked me early the following week if I had prayed for you at the time, as I felt as though I had sent you *waves* of sympathy and consolation.

"Please make any use of this letter you like.

"What has impressed itself so much on me is, that on *each occasion* you were aware that it was *I*, and not any other friend, who was praying for your intention.

"Yours affectionately,

"P. M. K."

Divine influx of grace must still remain amongst the ideals, the results of which are described by Professor James as the symbols of reality. There is little that investigation can touch in this region to prove the workings of a power which is beyond that of man, but it is none the less real to the psychic of to-day as to the old mystics who experienced it in so much greater a degree. Personal testimony, if freely given, would but prove the existence of spiritual grace which is not denied to the most humble.

The next step in psychical research is to discover what constitutes the necessary *rappport* between human beings which makes telepathic communication possible ; why strangers can be *en rapport* without any desire or effort on either side. An incident which demonstrates a double *rappport*

between myself and two others simultaneously, one alive and the other dead, would never have occurred but for a chance discovery of a natural attunement between me and the discarnate personality during his earth life.

He was a perfect stranger to whom I had occasion to write on a matter of business without any sort of introduction. The necessary answers to my letters were written in a few lines by a secretary, but his reading of my letters evidently created the *rapport*. I became aware of two distinct and unknown pieces of information with regard to my own affairs which he postponed explaining to me until an inevitable meeting which took place at a much later date. They are not attested. I give them as incidents which brought the fact of a natural *rapport* to my notice and was the means of getting all other incidents of telepathy between us attested by responsible people.

As time went on, there was a certain amount of personal correspondence between us owing to his interest in some of my psychic work, and it was then that I found myself able to ascertain about the hour he read my letters. We proved it in this way. I would invariably know the substance of his answer to my letter the day he received it by means of inspirational writing slightly characteristic of his. It was puzzling at first, because he never actually wrote his

answer until after a few days' interval, but the correct reply and once definite criticism on a specified case, being transferred to me simultaneously when he was, in all probability, reading my letter, made me conclude that he generally determined his answer at the moment of reading. This was his rule, he assured me when we discussed the matter later ; it was seldom that he changed his original opinion, and his letter, postponed by stress of work, was exactly as he had formed it mentally when I received it.

After his death I received similar communications. The feeling of presence was then greatly strengthened, and I had visionary experience which gave added conviction. The handwriting became more characteristic in spite of the fact that, in order to test this particular manifestation as far as possible, I would write in the dark or in a half-light, too dim for me to see the writing as it came. I also held the pen in a perpendicular position, with the point lightly resting on the paper, and no part of my hand or arm touching the table. Still it was characteristic, sometimes more and sometimes less. There were communications which were satisfactorily verified, but these point more to personality than to the subject in question—the dual *rapport*.

We wrote regularly for a few months. Incidentally, his widow was almost a stranger to me ; we had met on two occasions only, both

previously to his death. There was no fixed time agreed upon for the communications. I would concentrate my mind on him for a moment and mentally send a message that I was at liberty to receive a communication. As a rule, there was a response after a very little delay, but one evening the response was not forthcoming so quickly. In the meantime, I had a curious feeling of being raised to a higher plane, so to speak, and it seemed I saw him standing by his widow, who was kneeling in an attitude of prayer. Directly after this, the pen wrote a message in his handwriting, and on reading it I found the following words: "I was with my wife—she was praying."

Noting the hour, I wrote to her for verification, and received a letter which I have as part of the documentary evidence, saying that it was quite correct. At the time stated, she was praying for him.

. So far as I can tell, and comparing the experience with many others, the actual feeling, culminating in clear vision, super-normal, but with the perceptive faculties keenly active, I take it as a case of dual telepathy, in its limited sense, between two human beings and, on the hypothesis of extension, between a lately deceased human being and myself.

Amongst the communications there were other occasions when I was equally aware of his

presence, and certain information, afterwards confirmed, gave some proof of his personality, but the above incident is the one isolated case when the *rapport* was evident between his widow and myself. I regard it as one of the most convincing experiences of telepathy that I have ever experienced.

In this light, no psychic can regard the "region of death" as more holy than "the language of angels"—that is, in the matter of experiment or criticism. Time and progress have proved that forbidden ground is localised by individual sight; the shrinkage of the globe, owing to modern inventions, is turning men's attention in other directions; interest always precedes discovery. Yet, in the name of religion, communication or communion with the dead is often opposed. The same influence that, in the past, would keep "speech without words" as a divine attribute too holy to be questioned is here to-day. It would fain shut our eyes to the understanding of God's laws and advocate the darkness of ignorance on preconceived prejudice and misconstruction, but, amongst the principal writers on eschatological subjects, this attitude is becoming less common. It is under the title of Immortality that we find most reference to psychic investigation. Some writers are still inclined to regard man's survival of death as Immortality, but the scientists do not agree that

evidence of survival, as it stands, proves such a stupendous fact.

The author of "Pro Christo et Ecclesia," in a chapter called "The Undiscovered Country," published in a recent volume entitled "Immortality," which contains a series of essays on modern thought by authorities on the subject, writes sympathetically on the possibility of communion with the departed: "It is quite possible that we have made an entire mistake in supposing that the souls of our dead friends are cut off from us . . ."

Miss Dougal distinguishes between communion and communication, taking communion to mean direct revelation and communication as necessarily conveyed through the medium of a third person. As a matter of fact, she is opposed to communication defined as Spiritualism, not, I think, so much in the belief that it is better to confine the exercise of a gift which enables one to receive direct revelation exclusively for private and personal use, as in the belief that purely spiritual aspirations will bring about the desired communion in a natural way.

The example given, which illustrates what Miss Dougal considers to be true experience, is interesting, but not uncommon. *A propos* of the comfort which a certain clergyman has derived from visiting a "medium," through whom he believes he has received characteristic messages

from the spirits of his son and his daughter (the veridical nature of which Miss Dougal questions), she relates the following story of a woman who had lost her husband when she was quite young. She had no faith in her vicar's teaching that God would comfort her, but comfort did come, and, as she subsequently felt, through Him. She had a wonderful feeling, first of the Presence of God, and one day, in the garden, when she was getting some flowers to put on her husband's grave, she knew that her husband was there with her in the garden, "only braver and stronger and more happy" than she had ever known him. She could see nothing; she heard nothing; and she could give no explanation of how she knew that he was there. This experience was followed by many others. She could give no proof except that of the fruits—the wise training and teaching of her children which she, as a foolish undisciplined girl, could never have done without superior guidance, and that guidance she believed to be from the spirit of her dead husband.

The vicar remarked, says Miss Dougal, that this woman evidently was unusual, spiritually minded, healthy and intelligent, but, he added, that he also thought that she had a lively imagination, and he questioned the veridical nature of her experiences.

It is the old mystics' experience of "Presence" to which is added the present-day feeling of the

presence of a known personality with the possibilities of communication forced by the immediate necessities of the beloved ones on earth. The fact that the experience was limited to feeling, although accompanied by recognition, shows that the subject was but slightly sensitive and not sufficiently psychic to allow of other manifestations of an auditory or visionary nature. The impressional stage is akin to inspiration, and is often the beginning of greater things—a rudimentary perception which often develops into more definite phases with the active co-operation of a suitable agent.

The communion of souls touches religion; it emanates from debatable land, so little known and investigated that it must remain for a while greatly a matter of faith, but the barriers will not break down unless there is persistent inquiry. The imaginary door which God has placed between the two worlds is conceived by man and closed through ignorance. The boundary lines are decided by individual limitations, if we are to believe history. The unknown country must needs remain a mystery so long as language limits expression; if new words are coined for fresh discoveries in this world, how impossible must be the task of giving anything like a true impression of conditions in a totally strange world except in parables or symbols.

A survey of mysticism, in spite of the corruption

that came through excess—for which mysticism has proved to be no exception to a general rule—emphasises essential values. The lofty aspirations of the great mystics evoked a like response. We may place full faith in their teaching of the Presence of God, the necessity for prayer and the truth of Divine revelation, if only on the basis of verified experiences of a lowlier nature. For their teaching is surely based on practical law of cause and effect; the noblest ideals in time may become realities, although far above our present limited understanding and aspirations.

The investigation of telepathy is not yet exhausted; indeed, it is hardly begun. In view of the progress of the last few years it may prove to be a language of angels in the most practical sense—not limited to spiritual beings, but common to “messengers” of God of the lowly degree of incarnate humanity, and “play some part in the growing sense of sympathy and humanity we find in the world around.” I quote from a notable authority, Sir William Barrett, who continues as follows in his well-known book, “On the Threshold of the Unseen”:

“If it (telepathy) were as common here among men, as it is doubtless common in the intercourse of the spiritual world, what a change would be wrought! If we were

involuntarily sharers in one another's pleasures and pains, the brotherhood of the race would not be pious aspiration or a strenuous effort, but the reality of all others most vividly before us ; the factor in our lives which would dominate all our conduct. What would be the use of a luxurious mansion at the West End and Parisian cooks if, all the time, the misery and starvation of our fellow creatures were telepathically part and parcel of our daily lives ? On the other hand, what bright visions and joyous emotions would enter into many dreary and loveless lives if this state of human responsiveness were granted to the race !

" It may be that telepathy is the survival of an old and once common possession of the human race that has fallen into disuse and almost died out with the growth of language. More probably, I think, it is a rudimentary faculty, or possibly an early and special case of the great human rapport which is slowly awakening the race to the sense of a larger self."

The telepathic sense, it is acknowledged, as a matter of experience, arouses pity without the aid of the physical sight of suffering. This sense of feeling—imagination—awakens interest ; in touching the hearts of the recipients, it cannot

fail to evoke a practical response in helping to alleviate the sufferings of others. Knowledge, in this case, is not happiness ; it increases service, and this form of service is a feature of to-day, not regarded as saintly, nor are the means of information considered divine.

Telepathy is mental action, the workings, in the lowest degree, of a law which is primarily spiritual. It is the bed-rock of inspiration.

Inspiration, the saints of old perceived as the vertical threads of an ideal through which the horizontal lines of progressive thought, interweaving with perfect exactitude, make a symmetrical pattern. The warp of inspiration, caught to earth and held firmly through the faith of idealists, is made fast by the woof of practical tests, carried backwards and forwards by the shuttle of divine purpose until a perfect mesh is completed. At one time a thread of an old faith is pulled into prominence ; at another it is pushed into the background while another thread, called new, comes to the front, only to be discarded later in the return journey ; and people then say, old faiths have had their day—new revelation is at hand. But, looking back, it is seen that there is nothing new after all. The old faiths are not, as each man thinks in his time, uprooted by the new ; they do but strengthen each other in unknown but definite purpose extending far beyond this mortal life.

The inspiration that is guiding us to the perception of a communion of souls, of incarnate and discarnate minds, may take us far beyond the grave. God's Acre may be an old name used to define a new country of fruitfulness and spiritual activity undreamt of yet by man, but, for the moment, we may not say that this hope gives any proof of immortality. We are touching but the threads of a hope in everlasting life—the fringe of Immortality.

A WELCOME DECREE
OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

A WELCOME DECREE OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

RELIGION and immortality are for most men one and the same thing. To some, immortality and survival are equally connected ; to many, the whole three are unfortunately combined in the one word spiritualism. What exactly the term spiritualism means to all individuals is unknown. It has many definitions if we are to believe all we hear. To one, it is a religion ; to the next, a science ; to another, a belief in the existence of a spiritual world peopled with spiritual beings, angels who guide erring footsteps, the traditional source of revelation. Or again, it is a raising of spirits, necromancy, enchantments or magic, the art of revealing future events by communication with the dead. There is no doubt that spiritualism conveys a very different meaning to different individuals according to their experiences, knowledge of the subject, or conclusions drawn too hastily on a limited perusal of indifferent literature.

To associate the serious investigators with the absurd and often fraudulent phenomena, which,

of course, do occur amongst less exigent individuals is a mistake. Equally they may believe in the existence of spirit as distinct from matter, but the fact of quality is not lost sight of by the more fastidious inquirer, and the existence of quality in all spiritualistic phenomena should not be ignored. As in every other subject, there are grades of inquirers and degrees of response and, to follow a usual proceeding, each one chooses the best, with a proportionate faith in his or her conclusions.

To the leading investigators, spiritualism is certainly not a religion, nor is the sole object of inquiry necromantic—a desire to know the future through communication with the dead. It is an inquiry into a system of communications from professedly departed spirits, chiefly through persons called mediums, by means of rapping, automatic writing and other manifestations of automatisms. The principles which M. Camille Flammarion concludes to be now established are :

(1) That the soul exists as a real entity independent of the body.

(2) That the soul is endowed with faculties not yet recognised nor understood by science.

(3) That the soul is able to act at a distance without the intervention of the senses.

At the meeting of the Church Congress, Autumn, 1919, it was announced by the Primate

that the whole subject of Spiritualism was to be considered by the Bishops at the Lambeth Conference the following year. Never, perhaps, has a decision of the Church aroused so much interest ; seldom has there been such extensive criticism by the general public. The opinions of authorities are set aside ; the ability of highly-educated men of sound principles to judge the results of systematic inquiry into a field of, hitherto, speculative thought, is questioned ; even the practical investigation of pathologists and scientists is regarded with mistrust. It seems that the average man is inclined to look upon spiritualism as a personal matter, and from that alone it is clear that the subject is one of general interest and demands serious consideration. It should, moreover, be studied as a great subject in all its different aspects with the same patience which is given to anything else that affects mankind. Too often is spiritualism judged hastily and welcomed as wholly good or dismissed as utterly evil, and on self-determined tests which would be ludicrous were they not pathetically futile. This illogical attitude is obviously based on limited individual experience, or on a cursory reading of the description of, perhaps, one side-issue which has caught the attention of a ready scribe. The study that has been given to current literature on the subject is, with few exceptions, hopelessly inadequate.

No spiritualist of any standing will agree that either extreme is justifiable. However strong his or her convictions may be as to the value of inquiry, the general opinion amongst investigators is that a great deal of discrimination is necessary in all evidential matter, and in the classification of certain manifestations of the psychic faculty. But with the advantage of practical knowledge, the psychic student sees that the attention of the Church may be, eventually, the means of a better understanding and a happy reconciliation between science and religion ; and further, that scientific proof of the survival of the human personality after bodily death cannot fail to undermine some of the chief objections to the belief in Christianity raised by materialistic sceptics. More especially is this hope of reconciliation strengthened when the people manifest an enthusiastic interest in spiritual things (whether for or against), in direct contradiction to the aspersion of lethargy which is supposed to be characteristic of the modern mind towards everything but the grossly material. And it is the duty of the authorities to guide this interest into the right channels, to raise the motive of inquiry into the unseen, to check the idle questioning, and to encourage a more respectful attitude towards a subject which eminent men have considered worth investigation. Psychic development is a feature

of to-day, and within the bounds of reasonable inquiry ; it cannot be crushed out of life by the weight of yesterday's orthodoxy, nor can it be relegated to obscurity to stagnate under cover of an abstract virtue.

The doctrine that all should believe by faith, although necessary at a certain stage of development, implies a similarity and quality of mind in humanity that does not exist. The lack of faith, so often condemned, is not a state to be envied when it comes to the matter of a life hereafter ; neither can the contentment that its possession gives be achieved by mere desire. Doubt is a form of curiosity which, if orderly and not idle, becomes scientific ; it is not peculiar to great intellect nor is it limited to scientists ; it is a natural inclination to inquire from the standpoint of incredulity in the abstract which demands fact. Call it agnosticism, atheism, or rationalism, in its respective degrees, it is a product of the age in which we are living—an age of exact science. The pursuit of truth is a sign of the times.

Of contemporary significance is this progressive attitude of the Established Church to confer with the scientists and others on a question which she has been loth to regard with toleration in the face of proven charlatanry and fraud. To say that spiritualism does not, roughly speaking, embrace much that a true follower of Christ

cannot accept, is too obvious to call for discussion. There is still the spirit of soothsaying and divination for material gain which was condemned by the Apostles; the most charitable cannot but look askance at the so-called "spiritual" manifestations through the mediumship of questionable characters. Taking into consideration experiments with mediums of undoubted honesty and respectability, it is contended that the majority of communications are *banal*, wanting in spirituality. Trivially personal incidents are touched upon, giving a flippancy to a message which ought, at least, to have dignity, considering that it is revelation of consciousness in a state which we instinctively regard with awe. "The spirits tell us nothing new" is the complaint of believers through faith in the doctrine of life after death; when given the supreme test of prophetic ability, they fail; and worse, they sometimes lie and lead the credulous—who pose as faithful—astray. Better far, says religion, to learn all from the Bible and take it that direct revelation or inspiration is of the past and that the open vision is now denied to mankind.

These grounds for opposition are all undoubtedly true and common knowledge to experienced investigators who agree whole-heartedly that, if spiritualism contains nothing more, it should be stamped out as potentially, if not actually,

pestilential. But, although true in every respect, it is not the whole truth ; and those who question the decision of the Primate to consider the whole truth are making as great a mistake as the determination to denounce the spiritualistic theory of inspiration—good and bad be it understood—and to attribute all such inspiration, “logically,” to the devil. In a Christian country are we to allow that Satan is omnipotent ? Has God no desire to help mankind ? No power to answer the prayers of His people by the inspiration of His Holy Spirit ? Much as we may disclaim the identification of the Holy Spirit as the spirit or personality who has recently inhabited a human body, we may reasonably take any inspiration that makes for the real good of humanity as holy. This is the faith of those who, by direct experience, have been convinced of the survival and conscious activity of personality after bodily death, the prior claim of spiritualism.

As a logical conclusion, the lower forms of divination, fortune-telling (not always false), backed up by the well-known patter “the spirits tell me,” are rife. Unnecessary and objectionable phenomena which appeal to the masses are inevitable. There is and always has been a certain class of medium ready to supply the popular demand. Since competent men became interested in the subject, honest mediums have been

found, incapable of intentional fraud, and guarded from unintentional deception by wise and scientific methods of experiment ; and, also, mediums of the leisured and educated classes do exist.

Until the exigencies of the bereaved in the war compelled admission, it was more usual for reserve to be maintained with regard to psychic gifts by unprofessional mediums. The name itself was a slur and, although certain distinguished investigators attempted to change it to "sensitive" or "psychic" to assuage the feelings of those who hesitated to share, publicly, a nomenclature with others less fortunate than themselves, the objection remained. The sixth sense, whether manifested normally and perceptibly, for personal knowledge, subconsciously or in trance for the benefit of others, should be defined by the one word, "medium," and this should be recognised as a gift that can be used for good or evil according to the aim of the individual and the desire of the inquirer. There is no manner of difference between the psychic powers of honest and even highly educated man or woman, and the unfortunate creatures who are hunted by the police, persecuted in the Press and driven, through poverty and ignorance, to submit to the demands of any fortune-hunter or idle seeker of frenzied phenomena, who are able to pay a fee.

There, but for the grace of God, goes myself, is

the sentiment of more fortunate mediums when reading the sensational report of another conviction of spiritualistic fraud in the morning's newspaper. Safe in the position of a comfortable home and guided by discrimination, based on sound moral teaching, one cannot but doubt if the law, in protecting a credulous public from deception and fraud, is sufficiently fulfilling man's whole duty to his neighbour. It is well to uphold the law, but there is basic reform which might well be considered with regard to the inquirers who go scot-free. There is the possibility that not mere fortune-telling but a purely spiritual quest by the public might result in a higher aspiration in the medium. The best of us are apt to respond to the popular demand in every field of production, and especially when poverty is the other alternative.

Spiritualism requires spiritualising ; moreover, like every other subject which commands a wide interest irrespective of class or distinction, its claims should be judged primarily by the practical experiences of skilled investigators, who agree that the claim of spiritualism lies in the belief of the superiority of mind over matter ; that man is a spirit and that his consequent survival of bodily death gives the hope that such belief can be, in time, scientifically understood. At present it may be tested by the systematic study of certain phenomena and communications

through the vehicle of the sensitively organised human beings usually known as mediums. This is the attitude of the best sort of spiritualist, not necessarily a scientist. There is another class of spiritualist to whom tests are unnecessary ; who, however, with a natural faculty of discrimination, will take the good and morally helpful messages, and put the guidance so obtained to the best use of which he or she is able. And there remains, of course, the large residue of over-credulous individuals who take all utterances through the lips of any so-called medium as valuable, independently of the obvious fact that, even if all does emanate from discarnate " spirits," it cannot be all good, all wise, nor all true. Over and above there is the investigation of mental communication known as Telepathy, which engages the attention of those who otherwise regard the subject as futile.

In order to understand that communications, consciously or subconsciously received, are not all given by discarnate spirits, it is necessary to know a little of the development of the mediumistic faculty. It usually has a beginning in vague impressions of ideas that are foreign to one's own thoughts, and consequently arrest the attention. These become clearer and more decided as time goes on, and clairaudience develops, singly or along with clairvoyance, which, incidentally, disposes of the objection so

often raised of communicating with unseen personalities. These communications occur sometimes during sleep ; as a matter of fact, good mediumship often develops into clear memory of activity in dreams which can be verified with regard to the personalities concerned, and especially is this so when the daily life is much occupied with practical work. There is, also, a sort of advanced foresight called prediction, which is part of the psychic faculty and, probably, more accurate when the cause of the future effect is known to the medium ; but there are at times flashes of insight into the farther future when, humanly speaking, no cause is in existence. Neither, however, is necessarily dependent on a communication from a discarnate spirit even in the form of inspirational writing, commonly known as " automatic." For this writing is not always called into action by " spirits " unless we take it that the spirit of incarnate man can produce written thoughts through the instrument of another's hand.

As a matter of experience and experiment this is, of course, not unknown, but it is disputed by a certain class of spiritualist who claims all manifestations to be caused by the dead. When, however, certain early investigators became aware that clairaudient and clairvoyant experiences and also writing were often due to the thoughts of living people and capable of experiment,

most of them realised the immense value and unlimited field of this discovery. So decided were they, at this stage, to ascribe nothing to the dead that could possibly have its origin in the mind of the living, that some readers still take it for granted that those manifestations of the vibratory energy of thought in some indefinable way depend entirely on the physical body. That is why we so often hear the term "telepathy" used to explain the inexplicable by the average man, whose knowledge of the subject is insufficient to give any light on telepathy itself, or to define exactly what he means by the "subconscious mind," an expression freely used as a final argument which disposes of the whole theory of mental communication as being possible and not morbid.

Not long ago I was given the opinion of an eminent nerve specialist that, within his extremely large experience, there were people who possessed not only one, but several senses over and above the five which are usually allotted to mankind, and they were not always by any means morbid. Unfortunately he is not alive to endorse this, but many pathologists, who are deeply and practically interested in this branch of psychology, confess that, at present, their knowledge of the conscious mind is so limited that they hesitate to speak with any degree of certainty of what the subconscious self may be capable. And

they agree that the development of super-normal faculties is one to be reckoned with to-day in the study of man's mental capacities.

Some consider that psychic development is merely the highly nervous and sensitive temperament due to civilisation ; others that it is an evolution of man's powers of understanding in line with modern discoveries which have overcome established law. Many of us can recall the days when aviation was generally considered an impossibility. " God never meant us to fly," was the sentiment expressed by certain individuals opposed to change, who justified their attitude by their own limited understanding of natural law ; but, all the same, modern invention has surmounted the immense difficulties of artificial flight by the production of our aeroplane of to-day. Past knowledge of physical facts has proved the basis of increased mentality, and it is possible that increased knowledge of the mental attributes of mankind will, in the same way, give us a complete understanding of spiritual law.

The progress made in experimental spiritualism since competent investigators took up the subject, points to a law of evolution with which death in no way interferes. The old belief in a sudden transition from a state of human imperfections to one of perfect spirituality is no longer general ; the idea of the immediate transformation of a

human being into a saint, with angelic attributes and angelic and heavenly desires, is changing. The hope of questionable happiness, in a state of everlasting rest, has given way to a more logical outlook on the immediate life-hereafter. Communications point to the persistence of personality as part of the survival of man. They are so often in keeping with a personality which appears to have remained so exactly the same that when high-flown ideas are expressed in beautiful English, or Scriptural phrases are used by a communicator who claims to be the spirit of a schoolboy, his identity is regarded as doubtful. Should actual proofs be given to establish his identity to the satisfaction of his friends, then it must be acknowledged that a change and not persistence of characteristics denoting personality is evident; but, generally speaking, the proofs of personality come in characteristic form.

As a matter of experience, the mode of expression, the banal allusions to trivial incidents in life that appear to accompany the train of thought which communication with a beloved friend arouses, are not to be despised as part of evidential matter. Another point is the apparent similarity of the state of death to a different mode of life in a new country with which communication is possible, and messages to intimate friends convey the impression of an ordinary

letter or telegram which some regard, quite naturally, as wanting in spirituality.

All this is already within reach of scientific inquiry ; although still in its infancy, there is progress in psychic experiment which may become still more perfect in the near future. At present, the mere suggestion that communication itself is possible is so new that the world will not accept it even as a working hypothesis. Without a close study of these communications and the conditions under which they may be obtained, no solution is possible. It is obviously one for pathological and scientific deduction, and to be carried out in a spirit of reverence and discretion. Until, therefore, science is in a position to set her seal of truth on these revelations, religion is wise in withholding her approval of indiscriminate investigation ; but, in the meantime, spiritualism requires the purifying and ennobling influence of Christianity.

As far back as history can relate, there has always been the spiritualism of the day. Oracles and prophets, witches and visionaries, have been consulted for material and spiritual purpose ; not always has the revelation been perverted to witchcraft and necromancy, but because of the predominance of evil has it been necessary for the authorities to discountenance, indiscriminately, all that pertained to the unseen. To-day we can work on proofs, and there is no

necessity to confuse good with evil. Individual experiences of communion with those of another world may be laid before the bar of modern science without fear of persecution, torture or death.

It was on the point of individual communion with One who had died that St. Paul was brought before the judges, and that Holy One was not then revered as Divine; the State did not believe Him to be the Son of God. "Is not this the Carpenter's son?" His crucifixion between two malefactors was regarded as the final failure to establish His Divinity. Death, according to the popular understanding, was the negation of His teaching. His resurrection was disbelieved. It might have been that the sole fact of St. Paul's blindness after the experience which caused his conversion would have influenced the populace, but it was the people who accused him in spite of the decision at the judgment seat: "We find no evil in this man; but if an angel or spirit hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God." And time has justified the words spoken by Gamaliel with regard to the apostles: "If this counsel or this work be of man, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it."

It is said that Christianity is a failure; that the war has proved it so. One writer claims that, although the hour has not yet struck for

eradication, Christianity has had its day; revealed religion, if it ever existed, belongs to the past, is another contemporary view; faith in the unseen is illogical. And yet, more than once, agnostics have solemnly affirmed that what they saw on the battlefields and experienced in the trenches have convinced them of the certainty of something over and above earthly existence. It is an open secret that there have been cases of individual experience when under the enemy's fire, criticised as hysterical and hallucinatory, but which, nevertheless, have brought men to a realisation of the power of God. In modern phraseology these experiences are psychic and to be reckoned with in the study of spiritualism.

This form of experience indicates that certain individuals are attuned to a still higher octave of vibrations than those set up by the thoughts of human beings or even the discarnate spirits of men. It is, doubtless, the response to a strong personal desire for spiritual enlightenment, but, apparently, in the light of psychic investigation, such revelation does not occur unless the individual has a psychic gift through which spiritual perception is possible.

To take a lower form than angelic manifestation of conscious revelation, we get experiences with the discarnate spirits of men—"Communion with the dead." When it is personal it is only personally convincing; when it is for another,

the matter becomes "Communication through a medium," and is evidential. The first is regarded with approval by some orthodox thinkers; the second condemned; but the actual experience is identical; and purely spiritual communion, angelic guidance, is not denied to mediums during quiet times of prayer. Unfortunately, angelic revelation is not verifiable, but communion with the dead is, and claims scientific inquiry which alone can put an end to pretentious mediumship and undesirable communicators. Skilled investigators are absolutely necessary who are willing to work patiently through the bewildering mass of evidence, good, bad, and indifferent, of a subject which is still in its infancy. The "pretensions" of mediums must be impossible.

Moral guidance through all is the crowning point, and it is here that religion should take pre-eminence. The scientific side is all-important so far as it goes. Science promises to step well over the boundary line that has, in the past, separated her from the Church; but that in no way decreases the responsibility of the men of God. The resurrection is not confined to the just, and if communication with the dead becomes an established fact to be taken reverently in hand, we must have assurance that the motive in communicating is worthy and justifiable in the light of Christian ethics.

When judgment is left to the average man,

what is the result? We are challenged to "spot the winner of the Derby," a sporting test, but one which means practically that the money is put on the medium and not on the horse. This remark is obviously made in good faith as practical and convincing, but the idea is none too moral.

It is a matter of astonishment to honest mediums how repeatedly that challenge is made in earnest by otherwise high-principled men as a test suitable to the subject. They cannot see that our object is the understanding of spiritual law. They do not seem to understand that such a prediction, if acted on—which one cannot doubt if the average man is taken at his own estimation—would be justifying the means by a colossal theft; direct allegiance to Mammon.

One turns with the utmost satisfaction to the few words addressed by the Archbishop at the recent meeting of the Church Congress with regard to spiritualism. He states that "the result of careful inquiry conducted by the best men and women, who have knowledge and experience on that great subject," will be considered by the Bishops. This is the voice of reason, but there is another aspect of the Archbishop's decision which cannot fail to strike the hearts of all who are practically interested in this investigation. It is the grave implication

that neither investigation nor the means of investigation can be truly justified, however great the subject, except it be carried out for the glorification of God in the service of men.

RELIGION.

RELIGION

THE belief in the possibility of communication with the dead, whether of the nature of a personal experience, through the assistance of a medium, or, still less privately, amongst a sympathetic circle of inquirers, classes believers, indiscriminately, as spiritualists. Under this name there are many who hold very different opinions on the various revelations purporting to come from the unseen, but despite the diverse conceptions of the source and quality of these revelations, from credulity in all, to discriminate investigation, the belief that the survival of man is now indicated by certain communications pointing to personality and continuity of purpose, decides the question.

As religion is acknowledged to be an important and an eternal element in human history, it is quite natural that men should ask—Is this belief compatible with Christianity? What is the effect of psychic revelation on religion? Does it disturb a reasonable faith in God?

Zealous opponents have no scruples in denying all possibility of communication with spirits

of the righteous. They have no hesitation in making statements to the effect that the substance of these communications prove this argument by their un-Christian or even profane doctrine. Most highly educated men express opinions, publicly, that the teaching of the spirits is antagonistic to Holy Scripture, and further, state that this teaching causes, not only a loss of supernatural faith, but deplorably moral and physical effects, and advocate a number of wrong ideas about man's responsibility, destiny, and morality generally. It is openly denied that a professing spiritualist is ever a Christian, at least in the traditional sense which demands faith.

It may be argued that these views are extreme and narrow, that judgment is decided on limited evidence—zeal combined with ignorance, as a matter of fact—and yet, if one is cognisant of the details of the unfortunate experience which has played, perhaps, only an isolated part in influencing the decisions of these separate opponents (and there are questionable experiences), it is easy to feel a certain amount of sympathy for the natural antipathy towards the whole subject. But the greatest influence on mankind is experience, therefore individual testimony is the only means of arriving at any sort of conclusion with regard to a revelation which is apparently a spiritual power.

Psychic experiences have a profound and

lasting influence on the individual religion. In some cases they give new light on old faiths ; in others, a positive conversion to ancient truths which have been supernaturally revealed. I doubt if evidence of a life-hereafter could fail to arrest the steps of those irresponsible creatures who eat and drink because to-morrow they die. I know that it has changed the whole attitude of some to whom life was a jest, but it is a matter for personal declaration which should not be withheld at the present crisis of spiritual judgment.

The extremely, and unfortunately, credulous attitude is responsible for the harm that is in spiritualism. Think for a moment of the conclusions of the leading spiritualists—the spirits of men survive bodily death ; under certain circumstances they are able to communicate with men on earth. Does that convey a certainty that the trend of all spirit communication will be of an equal morality ? And, if of a doctrinal nature, to be followed implicitly, without question, simply because it purports to come from the unseen ?

On the contrary, the belief in the possibility of spirit communication, implies, as a logical sequence, that a sound investigation will regard the question of personality, meaning the communicator, or the one behind the medium, as all important. He does not shut his eyes to the

fact that there are as many undesirable people in the next world as ever inhabited a physical body. The acceptance of personality without proof or the obedience to a communication without caution is condemned by all who know anything of the subject. Deny if you will the existence of a personal devil, principalities and powers, as old-fashioned and superstitious, but you cannot get away from the fact that evil exists in this world through the wickedness of men, and that evil thoughts precede evil actions. Evidentially, we have no reason to suppose that there is an instantaneous change of personality when these men die or that their influence ceases at death. Ignore this fact and there you have the danger of spiritualism.

Whether it is quite fair to confine this danger to spiritualism is a debatable point. Long ago it was decided that success or otherwise in life depended very greatly on the influence of one mind upon another. History relates that a royal criminal was once asked if she had used any form of witchcraft or supernatural means to overcome the machinations of her enemies. Her reply was—only the influence of a stronger mind over the weaker. This influence is not now thought criminal unless the power be used on a person certified to be of weak mentality. No one questions the “undue” influence which all know plays an important part in the struggle

for ambition or even for the very means of existence, least of all, the psychic to whom thought is understood as a real and actual influence. When thought is considered as operative on the mental plane, as a supremely powerful influence on human actions apart from any higher conception, the Divine precept "Men ought always to pray" has a more definite meaning. To a psychic it is pre-eminently practical.

In my own experiences, and I repeat, mine is no isolated case, there is much which has forced my belief in prayer and on a purely logical basis. As mere thought, I find it an influence on human beings, the extent of which none can gauge; the interchange of mental vibrations alone causes much happiness and unhappiness. Comparatively few are unaffected by the mental depression of a confirmed pessimist. It can be conveyed in speech without words, that language of angels which may, on the other hand, cheer and strengthen the down-hearted quite as decidedly when the thoughts are encouraging and kind.

When prayer is successfully used as a means to obtain a definite desire, the actual response is not confined to one of the psychic temperament, but because of the slight knowledge we have of the effect of this mental action of petitionary prayer, we take it that service, even when guided only by an unaccountable impulse, is a duty.

The "mysterious" workings of prayer, the natural rapport, which we believe is created between a sufferer and one fitted to respond, shows that the responsibility lies in man and not in God. But none the less real is divine communion, inspiration and guidance which are over and above the purely human faculty.

The agnostic may say we cannot prove it. At the present, no! But we have a sure foundation in verified experiences which strengthens our faith in an increasing understanding of spiritual law. Inspiration instilled by a human being conveys a feeling of personality which we recognise. A guiding thought is traced by this feeling of presence to its source, when human. The feeling of Divine Presence is so distinct from that of a human being or a discarnate spirit that faith in Divine guidance, based on verified spiritual (or mental) communication is absolute.

This faith is based purely on experience, and is not due to a doctrinal teaching of discarnate spirits. My teaching has always been on the lower level of human possibilities—the level of verification. The methods and means of communication have been made clear by demonstration. I quote a few lines of early automatic writing from a regular communicator :—

" Take the listening attitude. Cast nothing

aside that is capable of proof, act on nothing without proof, and bring the critical faculties to bear on all communications, and judge them by the standards of the highest morality, truth and expedience."

None have ever tried to influence my personal religion. Psychic manifestations have been explained on scientific lines. Prayer, for instance, has been treated in its simplest form, as mental research rather than a higher and mystical exercise of a faculty beyond verification. "Test all by your own Scriptures and your own conception of Christianity" was the sole religious injunction.

There was always an insistence on the law of cause and effect. Minor predictions demonstrated this in no uncertain way; retrospection proved the wisdom of certain communications which advocated making the future by perpetual effort rather than trusting to an uncertain power of divination.

The obvious fact of continuity is, to me, a warning in itself. The decision of the future in this world, resting so much with the individual, appears likely to extend beyond the grave: logically we can influence, if not determine, the conditions of the life-hereafter by our desires in this world. The ascending degree of spiritual perception of things formerly unseen is a proof

in point. I use the word "unseen" literally, not merely as something outside of the physical senses, but above the individual spiritual sight. But this is personal deduction and not spirit communication which, in my case, has been pragmatic.

What the communicators did teach was the strengthening of the mental faculties through a practice of regular concentration as a weapon suitable to combat evil thoughts and kindred dangers which are supposed to surround a sensitive. Purity of thought and the efficacy of prayer, in the divine sense, were emphasised as a safeguard on the basis of a natural law of attraction said to be pre-eminent in the spiritual world. Purpose has always been described as the keynote of a future existence.

It is said that the reserve of Christ upon the subject of a future life—I quote Canon Vernon F. Storr—His refusal to satisfy curiosity, His deliberate reticence in presence of the exuberant speculations of contemporary Judaism upon the subject, are indications that for most men such inquiries are not intended.

If one is to go entirely by psychic ability, there is no doubt that such inquiry is not intended for all men. If, however, as some scientists assert, the dead can communicate through the help of a psychic or by the use of a human organism, it must be admitted that progress and evolution has

brought a certain phase of the future state to an immediate present which changes the whole aspect. The far-away country is now within speaking distance, naturally or through the means of a natural agency.

We cannot hope for an accurate description of life and the conditions of life in that country except in parable or expressed in words denoting an equivalent feature of earthly existence. As a common comparison, imagine the difficulty a butterfly would have in endeavouring to convey any sort of idea of his world to a chrysalis. Or to explain his mode of locomotion to another to whom the word wings would have no meaning. Language is the barrier.

But this only applies to speculative thought and idle curiosity which cannot evoke a response in accordance with serious investigation which seldom fails to precede discovery. With regard to things unseen there is a promise: Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you—a promise which is abundantly fulfilled.

I speak from psychic experience.

The subliminal level at which we are supposed to live so constantly is but an extended area of the conscious self. In the outcome of private and personal phenomena we touch on Ideals which Professor James says must be Realities in the completest sense of the term—the

cosmic in general being but the symbols of reality.

Traditional accounts of the life of Christ, the miracles He wrought, His death, Resurrection and Ascension are not difficult of belief to any who have had psychic experiences; the coming of the Holy Ghost, the supernatural events in the lives of the Apostles are recognised as fact. We have seen the hitherto impossible manifested in a less degree, but because miracles which, to our past limited understanding, have happened, our faith in greater things, impossible to verify, is strengthened; our hope in the fulfilment of Divine promises, increased.

Christianity, based on prophecy, sustained by inspiration, is consummated in the Resurrection. It has a personal element in Jesus Who lived on this earth that we might have a perfect example to follow. The fact of a resurrection of men and women personally known to us—an experience which never fails to arouse a profound feeling of awe and wonder on every occasion—deepens our faith in the Resurrection of our Lord. It is through our small experience that we can more fully understand His appearance to the chosen few who loved Him, and appreciate, with absolute conviction, the truth underlying all His teaching. We acknowledge an unlimited faith in an infinite Saviour.

Two examples will suffice to support the

testimony to Christianity by leading investigators who have inquired into psychic phenomena from a scientific and not from the religious standpoint.

In his preface to a book called "Reason and Belief" which Sir Oliver Lodge published ten years ago the following passage may be found :

" So much has had to be modified in deference to scientific discoveries . . . It cannot be maintained that general conviction of the New Testament has remained quite unshaken. In so far, however, as my own researches have led me to perceive a profound substratum of truth underlying ancient doctrines, and in so far as the progress of science, instead of undermining, actually illustrates and illumines some of them, I consider it to be my duty as well as my privilege to indicate to the best of my ability how matters stand . . . The position taken in this book is the result of a lifetime of scientific study ; and its basis is one of fact."

More recently he makes a further statement the meaning of which is unmistakable :

" I want also to say that although it is not by religious Faith that I have been led to my present position, yet everything that I have learned tends to increase my love and reverence

for the personality of the central figure in the Gospels."

And later still, after a personal bereavement, the greatest test of faith, Sir Oliver adds a prophetic remark with absolute conviction :

" Those who think the day of that Messiah is over are strangely mistaken."

The other example of personal testimony is from one of the early pioneers of psychical research, Frederick Myers. It is well known that he lost his faith in Christianity, but it is not always understood that, through the study of spiritualistic phenomena, lost faith was regained. Evidence of this is to be found in his last writings which were published posthumously under the name of "Fragments of Prose and Poetry," wherein a spiritual pilgrimage is faithfully recorded. In a portion of the chapter entitled "The Final Faith" he speaks for himself :

" Yet I cannot in any deep sense contrast my present creed with Christianity. Rather I regard it as a scientific development of the attitude and teaching of Christ.

" You ask me what is the moral tendency of all these teachings—the reply is unexpectedly simple and concise. The tendency is, one may

say, what it must inevitably be—what the tendency of all vital moral teaching has always been—the earliest, truest tendency of Christianity itself. It is a reassertion—weighed now with new evidence—of Christ's own insistence on inwardness, on reality : of His proclamation that the letter killeth but the spirit giveth life ; of His summation of all righteousness in Sheer Love to God and man . . . Of all emotions the passion of love is that which brings the intensest joy of exalted vitality—and I believe it is no mere metaphor which describes Love as the characteristic energy of the Spiritual world . . .

“ I look upon Christ as a Revealer of immortality absolutely unique, as the incomparable Pioneer of all wisdom that shall be learnt concerning unseen things. But, like the Norseman's discovery of America, His work grows more and more remote, and there are no sure seamarks for others to follow along that legendary way. A new discovery is needed—to be made by no single Columbus, but by the whole set and strain of humanity ; by the devotion of a world-wide labour to the deciphering of that open secret which has baffled the too hasty, or too self-centred, wonder and wish of men. And such an inquiry must be in the first instance a scientific, and only in the second instance a religious one. Religion in its most

permanent sense is the adjustment of our emotions to the structure of the Universe ; and what we now most need is to discover what that cosmic structure is.

" I believe, then, that Science is now succeeding in penetrating certain cosmical facts which she has not reached till now. The first, of course, is the fact of man's survival of death."

The desire of the true spiritualist is to give scientific proof that in death there is no finality : that, although physical death is real, there are no dead—God is indeed a God of the living, faithful to His promises ; that He may be trusted, loved and served as a Heavenly Father Who keeps, guides and teaches us through those who loved us best in their earthly existence, a fulfilment and continuance of a natural law sometimes called Divine, to lead us out of darkness and change the shadow of death into a gleam to light the way toward the Supreme Goal.

THE END

